THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • APRIL 26, 2021 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 32 • LATE CITY EDITION

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551 O_2 GENERATION PLANTS TO BE SET UP IN GHs ACROSS INDIA

The dedicated pressure swing adsorption (PSA) plants aim to arrest the acute shortage of oxygen gas across the country

EXECUTION COST BORNE BY PM-CARES FUND

The plants, funded by PM-CARES, will soon come up at identified hospitals in district headquarters to ensure they have a captive oxygen generation facility. Along with the 'top-up' liquid medical oxygen, these facilities seek to ensure that government hospitals do not face sudden disruption in supplies and have adequate stock to manage Covid patients

162 SANCTIONED EARLIER, 33 OPERATIONAL

- Earlier, the Centre had claimed that 33 of the 162 approved PSA plants were functional. But ground reports suggested even that many were not operational. The 551 are in addition to the 162
- Hospitals appear more comfortable at present with the oxygen refill system that is already in place instead of pushing for PSAs

150 tonnes

LIQUID OXYGEN CARRIED SO FAR BY THE RAILWAYS' OXYGEN EXPRESS

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POSITIVE IN BENGAL

A patient who tested positive for Covid-19 being taken to a critical care unit at the M R Bangur Hospital in Kolkata on Sunday | ARUNAVA SEN

US finally agrees to export raw materials

Stung by the barrage of criticism it drew for refusing to lift export embargoes on raw materials to manufacture vaccines in India, the White House late on Sunday night decided to ease the curbs so as to help produce Covishield. The decision to ease the bottleneck came after the US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan spoke to his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval on the phone | P7

NATIONWIDE

	APRIL 24	APRIL 25
Fresh cases	3,46,786	3,49,691
Recoveries	2,19,838	2,17,113
Deaths	2,624	2,767

OUR IPL SPACE

Starting today, *TNIE* will gainfully utilise the space freed up by suspending IPL coverage. To begin with, we have a picture collage capturing grim Covid reality across the country

PAGE 11

Bengaluru City Police personnel check a motorist during the weekend lockdown, imposed as a measure to contain the spread of Covid-19, in Bengaluru on Sunday | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

Explosive rise places B'luru at top of active Covid heap

City records 151 pc spike in patient volume since April 15; Experts call for tough steps

NIRAD MUDUR & BOSKY KHANNA
@ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA's capital Bengaluru has emerged as the city with the highest active Covid-19 case load in the country with 1,80,542 patients currently under treatment in hospitals and in home isolation.

Experts are rattled by the scary explosion of cases in Bengaluru, on which they are basing their desperate appeal for much stricter measures — even a complete lockdown — to stem the massive infection spread.

Bengaluru has recorded a whopping 151.35 per cent increase in the volume of patients currently under treatment since April 15, when the figure was 71,827. With this huge jump, Bengaluru, with a dubious distinction, is far ahead of Delhi (93,080 active case load) and more than double that of Mumbai (75,498), which are ranked second and third, respectively.

Bengaluru's active case load has increased dramatically over the past few days and the number, at present, is 27.62 per cent of the total number of people who tested positive in the city since March 2020. On Sunday, the city added 20,733 new cases, taking the total to 6,53,656.

It is this explosive rise in numbers that has thrown the city's health system out of gear, leading to oxygen shortages and non-availability of beds, even for critically sick Covid-19 patients across Bengaluru.

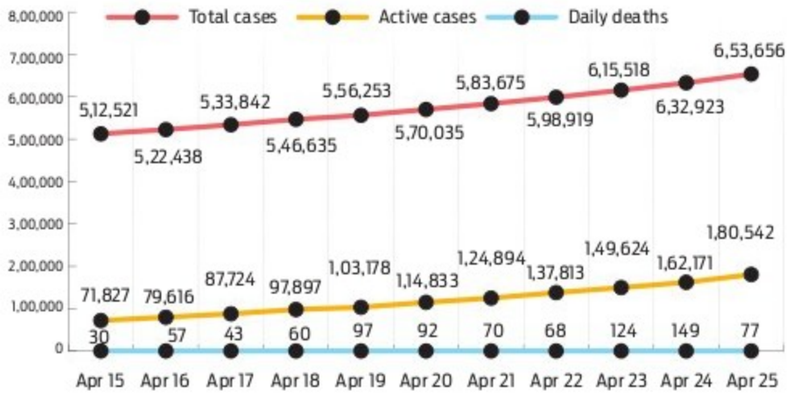
Professor at Indian Institute of Public Health Dr Giridhara R Babu, a senior epidemiologist and member of the state government's Technical Advisory Committee, told *The New Indian Express*, "There is a need to impose a lockdown, and the time should be utilised by the government to increase facilities like oxygen beds in all hospitals, medical colleges, nursing institutes, Covid Care Centres, hostels, ayurvedic and homeopathic hospitals and colleges. In the first phase, more efforts were made than what is being done now. In the second wave, the intensity and efforts need to be scaled up by five times to handle the situation."

Looking at the way the numbers are spiking, he foresees the second wave peaking in mid-May. P5

CITY LIKELY UNDER FULL LOCKDOWN TILL MAY 5

A complete lockdown in Bengaluru is likely from April 26 evening to May 5 morning, according to sources in the government. Thereafter, an extension till May 20 is also being considered, if necessary. A final decision will be taken by the CM after consultations with the Centre on Monday after the cabinet meeting, the sources said.

WORRYING STATS Bengaluru Urban has logged a whopping 151.35% jump in active cases in the last 11 days, making it a major Covid hotspot



Delhi extends lockdown by a week, Mumbai breathes easy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi/Mumbai

On a day the Delhi government opted for another week of lockdown to contain the spread amid an erratic oxygen supply that is crippling its healthcare system, Mumbai seemed to have turned the corner, with its municipal body on Sunday saying that a dip in numbers, fresh arrival of vaccine and adequate oxygen supply had bolstered its fight.

Announcing the fresh lockdown till May 3, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the positivity rate had peaked to 37% during the ongoing shutdown, before dipping to under 30% on Sunday. "This is not to say that the disease is ebbing. It may increase or decrease in the coming days," he said. The city government, however, allowed courier services and some sections of self-employed people to ply their trade, provided they possess e-passes.

Stating that the oxygen situation in Delhi was still dire, he said: "Delhi's requirement is 700 MT and what's reaching us is 330-335 MT." He said he has written to the CMs of all states to divert their surplus to Delhi to bridge the shortfall.

Meanwhile, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation said it will resume inoculation at all its centres with the arrival of 1.5 lakh fresh Covishield doses. Its municipal commissioner said that the oxygen situation, too, was 'normal' as all supply issues had been resolved.

WITH THIS ISSUE

THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex — 32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF edex, 4 OF CITY EXPRESS

Give jabs to all for free, says Oppn as govt eyes options

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

WITH about 17 states, including Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, announcing free vaccines for all its citizens aged above 18, the Opposition in Karnataka has urged the government to follow suit.

While the Karnataka Government has placed an order for one crore doses on Covishield vaccines at a cost of Rs 400 crore to vaccinate those above the age of 18 in the first phase, no decision has been taken on whether it will be administered free of cost or whether it will be subsidised for the citizens. A discussion on this issue is expected to be taken during the Cabinet meeting on Monday where Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa will also review the Covid-19 situation and the need for enforcing more restrictions.

Leaders of the Congress party, meanwhile, have demanded that vaccines be given free of cost to citizens of all ages. "India is probably the only country which is discussing vaccine prices, when it's being given for free across the world. Why has Karnataka govt still not announced FREE VACCINATION for all? I demand that free vaccines be given to all citizens & a roll-out plan be shared ASAP," asked Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D K Shivakumar. His demand for free vaccine resonated with netizens as well. P4

Hospitals, PHCs running out of vaccine stocks

BANSY KALAPPA & DIVYA CUTINHO
@ Bengaluru, Mangaluru

AT a time when the Covid-19 is raging and the number of people seeking vaccines has gone up substantially, many hospitals, especially private entities, are running out of stocks of both vaccines across major cities. On Sunday, St Philomena's Hospital in Vivek Nagar and Axon Hospital in HAL Stage II, both in Bengaluru, had put up posters about non-availability of vaccines.

Many of those seeking to get vaccinated on Sunday, specially senior citizens who were scheduled to get their second dose, had to return from St Martha's Hospital, Abhaya Hasta Hospital and Brimecare Hospital as they were told that there was no vaccine available. "The same was the situation on Friday and Saturday," said Divaker P D, a resident of HSR Layout in South Bengaluru. "For the first dose, they could take appointments on the phone. But for the second dose, they need to just walk-in and wait. It can be a nightmare for senior citizens to drive from hospital to hospital looking for the vaccine and wait for hours thereafter," he rued. P4

STATEWIDE

	APRIL 24	APRIL 25
Fresh cases	29,438	34,804
Recoveries	9,058	6,982
Deaths	208	143

Govt hijacking vax, claim Cong-ruled states

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

ACCUSING the Centre of step-motherly treatment, states ruled by the Congress and its allies on Sunday said it is hijacking vaccines from manufacturers and doubted if they will be able to vaccinate people in the 18-45-year age group from May 1.

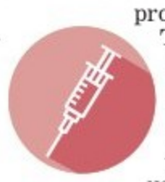
At a joint press conference, the health ministers of Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Punjab and Jharkhand said the Centre has already taken away a major portion of the stock and doses are not available to them.

"How do we vaccinate adults of 18-45 years as Serum Institute has said they will not be able to provide vaccine till May 15? We have the capacity, but not the vaccine. States should get the supplies. The Centre should provide vaccine," Rajasthan health minister Raghu Sharma said.

His Chhattisgarh counterpart T S Singh Deo alleged that the Centre was playing politics of vaccination. "There is no way shots can be administered if the vaccine is not available. How will we provide vaccination? We are ready to vaccinate, provided we have the vaccines. The country is being misguided. The Centre has made a joke of this," he charged.

Punjab Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu said, "If the Centre does not support us, how can we roll out the vaccination drive? We are only hand-to-mouth on vaccines," Sidhu said.

Jharkhand Health Minister Banna Gupta charged that "the government that talks of one Constitution, one tax, is now trying to derive benefit out of the pandemic through differential pricing of vaccines."



No reason for states to complain, says Vardhan

New Delhi: The Centre liberalised the vaccination strategy following requests from nearly all states to do so, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Sunday, adding there was no reason for them to complain now | P7

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Har Pal Aapke Saath

LIC/AR/2021-22/01/Eng

ALMANAC TODAY
Monday: 26/04/2021 • Year: Plava • Ayana: Uttharayana
Ritu: Vasantha • Masa: Chaitra • Paksha: Sukla • Tithi: Chaturdashi 11.53 am
Nakshatra: Chittha 11.10 pm • Moon in Tula Rashi • Rahukaala: 07:30 am to 09:00 am
Gulikakala: 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • Yamaganda: 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER
MIN 23°C | MAX 33°C
FORECAST
Showers late. Overcast

Sunrise 6.01 am
Sunset 6.33 pm
Moonrise 5.55 pm
Moonset 5.17 am

A few spells of rain leave swanky rail terminal leaky

Subway of Rs 314-crore terminal, which connects all platforms, completely flooded, water seeps from roof

Rain seeps inside the Sir M Visvesvaraya Railway terminal at Baiyappanahalli on Friday

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE two sharp spells of rain in Bengaluru over two days have completely exposed the oft-repeated claims of Sir M Visvesvaraya railway terminal in Baiyappanahalli as a world-class one. The Rs 314-crore terminal, India's first air-conditioned one, had its subway which connects all platforms completely flooded and water seeping from the roof of the building inside all rooms, including the one where the signalling panel is placed.

The world-class terminal, readied by the Constructions Division of the South Western Railway Zone, was ready two months ago and awaits inauguration by the Prime Minister.

A senior railway source told *The New Indian Express*, "The subway that connects all the Platforms from 1 to 7 was flooded with knee-deep water. There was seepage from the top and water reached the floor of the main terminal, which is fully glassed, as well as the station master's building within the huge campus."

An official said that the worrying part was that leakage had also happened in the room housing the control panel that takes care of the entire signalling operations. "The rains on Wednesday and Friday were not heavy. Despite that, there has been so much damage. If there is any malfunction in this Rs 40-crore signalling board, then it will have a major impact on train operations," he said.

> **The rains on Wednesday and Friday were not heavy. Despite that, there has been so much damage. If there is any malfunction in this Rs 40-crore signalling board, then it will have a major impact on train operations** — Official

Reacting to the development, the South Western Railway said the valley gutter leading to the rainwater drain had overflown resulting in water ingressing into the main building for some time. "The gutter will be examined thoroughly again and remedial measures will be put in place to prevent its recurrence," it said. The rainwater harvesting system was undergoing final phase of checks prior to its commissioning and, when it is ready, rain water will flow into the designated channels, it added.

"At present, the entire water from the roof of the main canopy is being diverted to the main drainage system leading to the water recycling plant. This has resulted in the drain carrying more than its capacity owing to the sudden downpour, resulting in back flow into the subway. The accumulated subway water has naturally drained within half an hour of the cessation of the downpour," it added.

7 CREMATORIUMS SET ASIDE FOR COVID BODIES

Modular ICU beds at Victoria, teaching hospitals

Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Sunday said the state government was thinking of setting up modular ICU and ventilator beds at Victoria Hospital and on other teaching hospital campuses. After inspecting Victoria campus, Sudhakar told reporters that 85 beds in one building and 180 beds under PMSSY will be reserved for Covid. Along with this, 100-150 bed makeshift hospitals will be set up here and in other medical college hospital campuses. He added that 5,000 portable oxygen generators for Bengaluru and 1,000 each for all districts will be provided. Also, 75 per cent of beds in all private medical colleges will be reserved for Covid patients, and 2,000-3,000 additional beds will be set up in makeshift units in all government hospitals within 15 days. He added that the Centre had agreed to allocate 1,22,000 Remdesivir vials to the state and increase daily allocation of medical oxygen from 300 tonnes to 800 tonnes.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

TO ensure limited rush at crematoriums, BBMP on Sunday notified that seven crematoriums of the total 12 in Bengaluru will not take any 'walk-in' Covid bodies, not referred by the BBMP helpline. They are Medi, Agrahara, Kudlu, Panathur, Summanahalli, Peenya and Banashankari. All non-Covid and walk-in Covid bodies shall be sent to the other five crematoriums, along with two open crematoriums created at TR Mills and Tavarekere.

BBMP Special Commissioner, Solid Waste Management, D Randeep, in the notification, directed the IT cell to disable all online bookings to these seven Covid-19 designated crematoriums, so that confusion is avoided and families of the deceased do not have to wait for long hours. He ordered that marshals will be deployed at these seven crematoriums to ensure that all Covid-19 referred bodies are accepted in the RFID-enabled hearse vans. Zonal commissioners are also directed to deploy sufficient police to ensure no large crowds gather, and Covid-appropriate behaviour is followed.

Bodies being cremated at a crematorium in Bengaluru on Sunday

The district administration started cremations at Kurubarahalli ground, Chennanahalli Gram Panchayat on Taverekere-Kengeri Main Road on Sunday. According to officials, 15 bodies were cremated on the first day. All infrastructure was created in four days -- pyre platforms built, borewell was sunk, water facility was created, firewood, skilled labour, shelter and other required facilities were created to cremate 25 bodies at once, using the traditional firewood method. The facility was created to reduce the burden on BBMP crematoriums. The administration office announced that everything will be free at this crematorium and assured them of zero waiting time.

Also earlier in the day, revenue department principal secretary N Manjunatha Prasad issued a revised order on people allowed in crematoriums. According to the order, cremation or funeral is allowed with a maximum of five people adhering to Covid19 behaviour.

From top: A deserted stretch of an expressway, without the bumper-to-bumper traffic, on the second day of the weekend lockdown imposed as a preventive measure against the spread of the coronavirus in Bengaluru on Sunday. Food delivery executives continue with their job during the lockdown | ASHISHKRISHNA HP, SRIRAM B N

RPF cops rescue man who fell off moving train

ENS @ Bengaluru

TWO alert cops of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) saved the life of a 39-year-old passenger who fell down while trying to alight from a moving train at Yelahanka railway station. The passenger, however, suffered major injuries in his right foot.

According to a senior RPF officer, the incident occurred on Platform 3 on Saturday when the Mumbai CSMT-KSR Bengaluru Covid special train was departing at 6.33 am. Gurjeet Singh, a native of Punjab, travelling in D-1 coach, realised that he forgot to alight at Yelahanka when the train began moving. "He rushed to the door and tried to jump on to the platform. The passenger slipped and fell in the gap between the train and the platform. Two railway cops patrolling the station - Madhav Singh and Ashish Kumar - rushed to the scene and pulled him out. His right foot was severely damaged and there were minor injuries on the leg."

As there was severe bleeding, the cops wrapped the injured leg with cloth and put a bag to cover it. "They called an ambulance and took him to the General Hospital at Yelahanka and then shifted him to KC General Hospital," the officer said.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

26th April: We're just emerging from a fantastically intense planetary alignment this week, connecting with Venus, lady of love, and Pluto, planet of passion. Yet before you rush off and promise someone your heart, stop and think. This particular pattern is also one of illusions, so we're all likely to be making the wrong choices!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Why do you rush around so much? You may get as much done if you slowed down a little, now that planets are in a relaxed mood. The trouble now is that Mars, your planetary ruler, is tending to make you obsessed with detail. But try putting your feet up for a change.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
Why do you have to spend so much time explaining all the pros and cons to people who don't listen? Perhaps because Mercury is currently in such a dastardly and mischievous relationship with your sign. Or, maybe, it's just that you expect too much of other people!

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
You know what they say - you can't live by bread alone. You can do no better than sacrifice your interests and help other people out for a change. Hopefully associates will now concede that you are indeed a caring and generous person. And about time too!

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You seem to have faced a series of setbacks and disappointments. Yet, with any luck, recent efforts are at long last beginning to bear fruit. Never fear - the end is in sight. There's one other factor to consider, and that's the extent to which you worry about nothing!

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
Your planets are benevolent, but you can't always stay positive. Do remember that there's light at the end of the tunnel, no matter how fed up you become with burdens and obligations. Don't be proud to ask for assistance. It could be given much more willingly than you expect.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Just because affairs in a number of areas are going so well, that is no cause for complacency. You are indeed at a turning-point, one from which you can be sure that all your interests will benefit. Passions are rising, so keep a steady nerve and stay cool.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
You seem to fall apart when your emotional life becomes too complicated. This is a problem you have to learn to face. The fact that domestic pressures may be all too real doesn't excuse you. But then you are also tending to turn small molehills into major mountains at the moment.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
You'll face awkward issues head-on this week, and won't be afraid to put forward ideas with clarity and vigour. You deserve to be heard because they are so fascinating. If you're not getting your point across, put yourself in a partner's place and see how it feels.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
Seldom have you seen such a potentially decisive period in matters relating to money and the ways in which you value yourself. If you believe in your talents then material reward will follow. You will also share in a partner's good fortune at some time over the next 10 days.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
A plethora of planets influencing your sign is why you are under so much pressure. Accept that the present period is hardly relaxed and use your time to launch the next phase of your life. By the way, children have some of the best ideas at the moment, so listen well.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
There are almost certain to be major confrontations this week behind the scenes and very few people will be aware that anything has gone amiss. Stick to the facts where possible, especially when talking to relations; they are unlikely to accept vague explanations.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
You'll begin to expand your social circle. Among the new friends you will get to meet now, some will be very important for your future. Your planets show helpful trends for everyone involved in travel and communication, in whatever sphere.

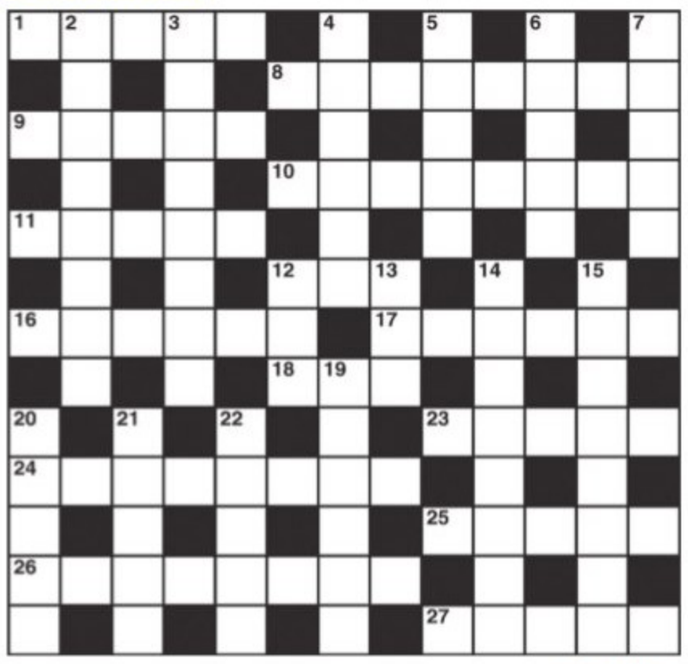
THE PHANTOM

BUT YOU MUST COME WITH US, MISTER TOWNS!
THE COMMANDER WON'T BE THERE... HE'S NEVER THERE...
STAY ON THIS ROAD, TRUSTED MAN.
I--I WANT YOU THERE! WHEN I TELL YOUR FRIEND, THE COMMANDER, OF ALL YOUR BOLD ACTIONS!
Falk
DE PAUL + WANG

HI AND LOIS

DID YOU KNOW THAT GRAY SQUIRRELS OFTEN FORGET WHERE THEY HIDE THEIR NUTS?
THAT MAKES ME FEEL BETTER ABOUT LOSING MY CAR KEYS.

CROSS WORD



JUMBLE

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NEYPN
TNCAE
ANSATZ
DFIOYM

Here's a dictionary, look it up.
Help! I don't know the word "finale."
You should find the definition yourself.
FOR THE STUDENT DOING HOMEWORK, LOOKING UP THE DEFINITION OF "FINALE" WAS A ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

ANSWERS TOMORROW

SATURDAY'S: **Jumbles:** UPEND ROUGH HIDDEN PAGODA
ANSWER: Even though he was smaller, the winner of the arm wrestling match – HAD THE UPPER HAND

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BEETLE BAILEY

BLONDIE

GUESS WHAT? I WAS PICKED TO PLAY ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN OUR SCHOOL PLAY
ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN PULL IT OFF, ELMO? LINCOLN WAS A PRETTY TALL GUY
OH...I THINK I'LL BE OKAY

LOCKHORNS

DENNIS THE MENACE

SUDOKU

Hard: Test your number crunching skill with our unique puzzle

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

					8	4		
	2	8	6			3		
	3			9			8	
		6	9	1				
	8			3			4	
				8	6	5		
	7			6			5	
		9			5	1	6	
		1	4					

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

6	7	8	1	9	3	4	2	5
3	2	1	7	4	5	9	6	8
4	5	9	6	8	2	7	3	1
9	1	4	2	7	6	8	5	3
8	3	5	4	1	9	2	7	6
7	6	2	5	3	8	1	9	4
1	8	6	3	2	7	5	4	9
5	9	7	8	6	4	3	1	2
2	4	3	9	5	1	6	8	7

CROSS WORD

ACROSS

1 Robust half of a famous comedy duo (5)
8 Lift to reveal switch (8)
9 Gently water the flowers (5)
10 Brief notes jazz fans sent back to the censor in Rome (8)
11 Close studies on the East (5)
12 Travel to a port in India (3)
16 Very little time (6)
17 Unpretentious old medicine (6)
18 Comfortable place to sit and have a drink (3)
23 Ensure one has a nap standing up (5)
24 Repaired and put back in stock (8)
25 Custom made clothing (5)
26 and 22 Down: Highly capricious bounders (8,5)
27 Refuse to commit oneself about the garden perhaps (5)

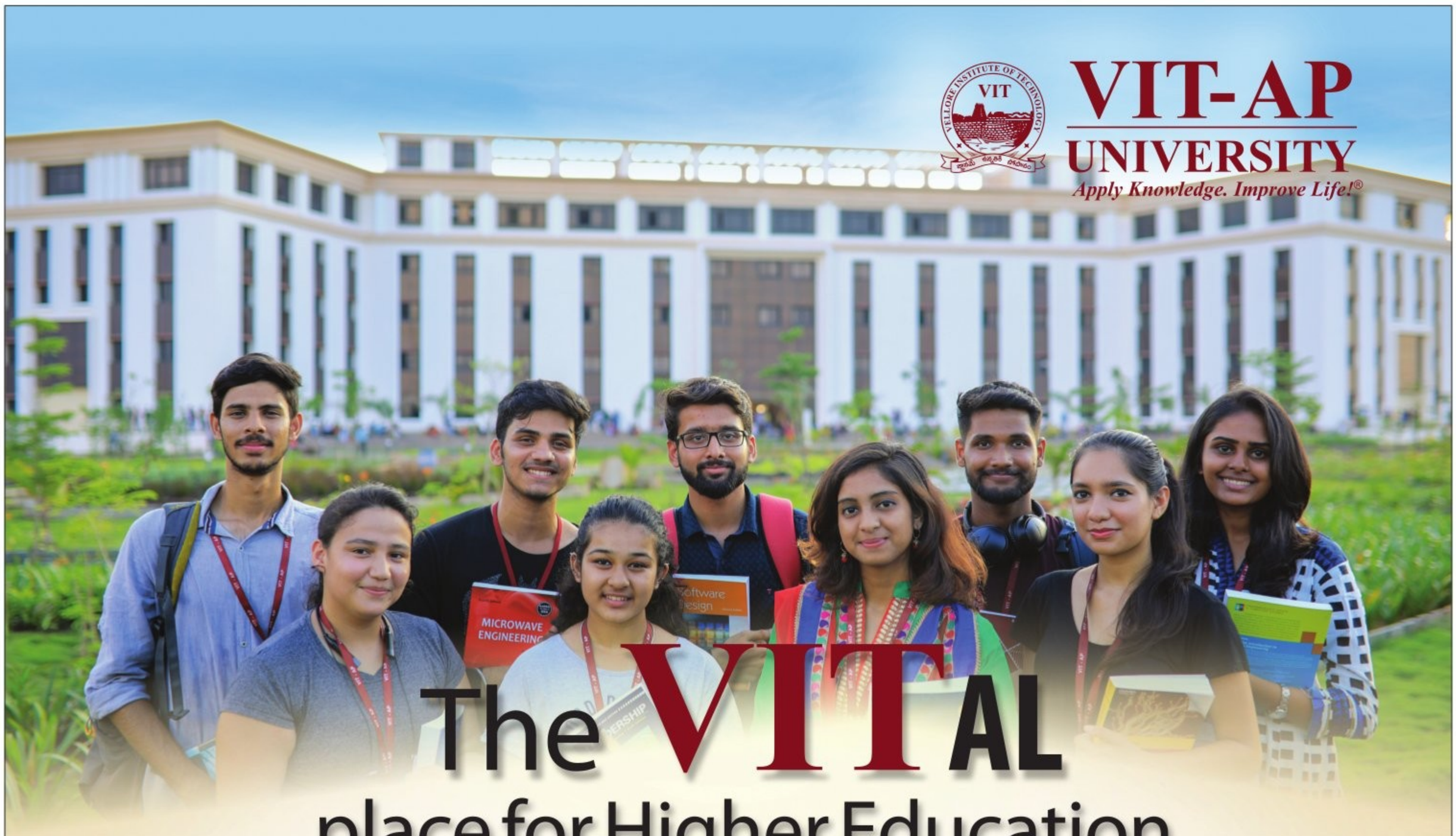
DOWN

2 Kind of order that should be kept in a fridge? (5,3)
3 Stretches toward us perhaps (5,3)
4 Drunk gets bottle opener before a game (6)
5 Create a vacancy possibly (5)
6 It holds the pieces returned (5)
7 Evidence of spiritual strength (5)
12 Set to give a leg up (3)
13 Cleopatra's preparations for death included it (3)
14 The strength of the current? (8)
15 Rousing game (8)
19 He has compiled a vocabulary (6)
20 Seagoing vagabond (5)
21 Is to prosecute in spring (5)
22 See 26 Across

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Touchstone, 6 Plus, 10 Bacon, 11 Gun turret, 12 Oriental, 13 Troll, 15 Exactly, 17 Slashed, 19 Panacea, 21 Outflow, 22 Night, 24 Creditor, 27 Tolerates, 28 Emend, 29 Maps, 30 Occasional.

Down: 1 Toby, 2 Uncertain, 3 Hence, 4 Tightly, 5 Nonplus, 7 Largo, 8 Settle down, 9 Subtract, 14 Peeping Tom, 16 Taciturn, 18 Halloween, 20 Ascetic, 21 Open sea, 23 Galop, 25 Iceni, 26 Idol.



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THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

COVID-19

04 BENGALURU MONDAY 26.04.2021

TRACKING COVID-19

SPEED AND RISE OF COVID-19 CASES IN KARNATAKA

34,804 CASES REPORTED TODAY

29,438 CASES REPORTED YESTERDAY

TALLY STANDS AT

TODAY	13,39,201
YESTERDAY	13,04,397

DEATHS

TODAY	YESTERDAY
143	208

DISCHARGES

TODAY	YESTERDAY
6,982	9,058

ACTIVE CASES

TODAY	YESTERDAY
2,62,162	2,34,483

POSITIVITY RATE

TODAY	5.41
YESTERDAY	5.31

MORTALITY RATE

TODAY	1.07
YESTERDAY	1.09

RECOVERY RATE

TODAY	79.34
YESTERDAY	80.92

The first Covid-19 case in Karnataka was reported on March 8, 2020. Since then till April 25, 2021, a total of 13,39,201 cases have been reported in 1 year and 47 days...

86,61,038 A total of people have been vaccinated across the state

VACCINATION DRIVE STATUS

Health care workers 1st dose	6,68,302
Health Care workers 2nd dose	4,14,593
Frontline warriors 1st dose	3,41,002
Frontline warriors 2nd dose	1,32,127
Age 45-60 1st dose	31,61,716
Age 45-60 2nd dose	1,59,187
Above 60 1st dose	33,15,349
Above 60 2nd dose	4,68,762

Govt sets deadline to get issues right

108, 1912 helplines will respond; Remdesivir, ICUs, oxygen will be available in 36 hours, says IAS officer

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

SHORTAGE of beds, Remdisivir, vaccines, oxygen and lack of quick service from 108 and 1912 and more. There are a lot of things wrong with Covid management in the state. But the administration says it needs 36 hours to set it all right.

"Everything will be in place. There will be response from 108 and 1912, vaccines and Remdisivir will be available and patients will get beds, ICU and oxygen," a senior government official, not wanting to be quoted, told The New Indian Express.

"This proves that the government has failed. What can be set right in one hour, the government is taking 36 hours! We are reaching a new peak of cases every day, and the number of people calling for basic services has increased, revealing that the system has collapsed," admitted a senior IAS officer.

Experts working closely with the government said they are being continuously informed about the second wave and the mutating strains of the virus. But the government (politicians and bureaucrats) are too confident of overcoming the second wave too. "An IAS officer at a meeting said, 'We successfully handled the situation last year and the Central Government

A file photograph of beds being set up at a Covid Care Centre in Bengaluru

applauded us. We will handle this too and there is nothing to worry'," the expert said.

"But looking at the helplessness of people, it is evident that the government has not learnt anything from the past. In fact, it is repeating the same mistakes and also committing newer ones," the expert added.

Private hospitals and State Government are blaming each other for the present situation. "The State Government should have increased the bed and oxygen supply capacity. It should have kept CCCs ready. More facilities should have been created in medical colleges and hospitals," a doctor from a reputed private hospital said.

But a government official retorted, saying, "It is the duty of private hospitals to cooperate and increase their capacity. During such times, instead of thinking of profits, they should focus on serving the people."

Amid lack of facilities, citizens are left wondering whether the government is functioning at all. "Why didn't the government prepare for what was going to happen? They have so many experts and the health minister is a doctor. He should have created facilities. We are forced to use influence for test reports, to get an ambulance, hospital beds and vaccine. It is a sorry state of affairs," said Madhu P, a citizen who sought help to arrange for an ICU bed at Manipal Hospital.

Workers of the Mysuru City Corporation load bamboo biers on to a tempo to be transported to crematoriums on Sunday | UDAYSHANKAR S

Bamboo biers in demand as deaths spike in Mysuru

SHIVAKUMAR K @Mysuru

AS the gloom descends over Mysuru with the number of deaths going up because of the intense second Covid wave, bamboo workers who prepare biers for bodies have been kept busy.

Mysuru, registering 1,144 Covid deaths over the last one year, is next only to Bengaluru, Ballari and Dakshina Kannada districts.

The steady flow of bodies at Mukthidhama crematorium in Vijayanagar Fourth Stage has made the Mysuru City Corporation place an order for around 150 bamboo biers from Guruprasad, a bamboo shop owner at Nanjumalige. Corporation workers collect 20-25 biers every alternate day. As the bodies reach the crematorium, they are placed on the bier and family members are called to perform the last rites before the bodies are put into the crematorium.

Guruprasad said they used to sell one or two biers a day earlier and worked on other craft items like wall panels and screens. But Covid has increased the bier orders manifold. He said that the situation is unprecedented and people should stay indoors to stay safe.

Mysuru City Corporation Commissioner Shilpa Nag said they purchase biers from Guruprasad at Rs 250 each. The biers are being used at both gas and electric crematoriums, she added.

Prepare Covid protocols for borders, says ADGP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Vijayapura

STRESSING on the management of interstate borders, ADGP Railways Bhaskar Rao directed the district administration to prepare border protocols on Covid for smooth operations between border areas of Karnataka and Maharashtra during the pandemic.

Rao, who is in charge of Northern Range (Belagavi) to enforce Covid guidelines, visited Vijayapura and assessed the Covid situation with DC P Sunil Kumar, ZP CEO Govinda Reddy and SP Anupam Agrawal on Sunday. Rao said, "Border areas in Karnataka are far more developed than those in Maharashtra. People from the other state may cross over for medical care. If the border protocol is not in place there are chances of illegal entry and clashes. I directed district officers to prepare a list of border protocols and distribute it to people on both sides of the border. We don't have any objection to people from Maharashtra coming in, but they have to follow certain protocols."

> I have directed officers to appoint separate nodal officers for bed management and supply of oxygen and Remdesivir. I have instructed district and police officials to take it to the taluk level
>
> Bhaskar Rao, ADGP (Railways)

ADGP (Railways) Bhaskar Rao in Vijayapura on Sunday to assess the Covid situation

Emphasising on decentralisation of power, he said, "Administration decentralisation is the need of the hour for proper management of the pandemic. I have directed officers to appoint separate nodal officers for bed management and supply of oxygen and Remdesivir. Instead of centralising administration at the district level, I have instructed district and police officials to take it to the taluk level. It will help us achieve transparency and implement government guidelines at the grassroots."

He said the people should take responsibility by wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. They have to cooperate with the government to beat Covid.

He appreciated SP Anupam Agrawal for achieving the highest vaccination rate among the district police. "Vijayapura police stand top among all the districts in achieving the highest vaccination rate in the department. Now, family members of the police personnel are being vaccinated," he added.

EXPRESS READ

Insufficient oxygen supply triggers concern

Mysuru: With Mandya having over 3,178 active cases, concerns over delay in oxygen supply augmentation have been raised from private hospitals. The district, despite its limited infrastructure, is in the red owing to surge in cases triggered by the second wave of the pandemic. The district presently has Liquid Medical Oxygen storage tanks of 13 kilo litre capacity in two hospitals but the issue seems to be on the supply side. Unlike Mysuru, the district stands out for the fact that it does not have an oxygen manufacturing units of its own and is dependant on either Bengaluru or Mysuru.

People return after not finding beds in B'luru

V VELAYUDHAM @Kolar

HUNDREDS of people from Kolar district, who had tested Covid-positive and rushed to Bengaluru for beds, have returned here without finding admission in any of the hospitals in Bengaluru, despite using influence.

Authorities said there are no beds available in Kolar too with the district SNR Hospital, RL Jalappa Medical College and general hospital wards being full. Without the availability of beds, many of these Covid-positive patients have now opted for home quarantine.

Sources said over the last two to three days, several patients had rushed to Bengaluru. They waited for hours before returning emptyhanded.

Final decision expected in cabinet meet

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

LEADER of the Opposition in the Assembly, Siddaramaiah, too said high prices of vaccines was becoming a barrier. "Instead of encouraging people to get vaccinated, the BJP government at the Centre has created a barrier by increasing the prices of vaccines. (PM) Narendra Modi, instead of PR events like 'Tika Utsav', ensure free Covid-19 vaccination to everyone," he tweeted.

Sources said the state is considering free vaccination for all. Given the financial burden it may have, suggestions on offering free vaccinations to economically weaker sections and subsidising it for others have also been made. A final decision is expected during Monday's cabinet meeting.

MAD RUSH

People wait in a queue outside a provision store during the lockdown in Bengaluru on Sunday. A few hours of relaxation was allowed for people to buy essential items | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

GOVT AND CII TO FORM TASK FORCE TO COMBAT COVID-19

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru:

THE State Government on Sunday announced that it has come together with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to form a task force which will help fight the pandemic. This announcement was made after Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar held a virtual meeting with health department officials and eminent citizens – Kris Gopalakrishnan, former CII president, Vikram Kirloskar, CMD of Kirloskar Systems, Cardiologist Dr Devi Prasad Shetty, and CII Karnataka chairman Ramesh Ramadurai, among others -- on Sunday.

Dr Sudhakar said that the task force, which will have representatives from CII and the health department, will help the government with technology, software applications, know-how, sourcing of medicines, medical equipment and oxygen. It will work on a master call centre for Covid and on detailing, and will be on the lines of of the Apthamitra helpline.

"Currently, there are multiple helplines for Covid management, which is causing confusion among the public. This helpline is likely to act as a master helpline for all aspects of Covid. The modalities will soon be worked out and training for the call centre executives is likely to be imparted by medical professionals from Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences," officials said.

Dr Sudhakar added that the State Government is planning to set up modular ICU units to address the rising demand for ICU beds. About 3,000-5,000 modular ICU beds are being planned in the state. The task force will also work with the government on making these modular ICU units a reality. There are a few companies which have come forward to set up these beds in 7-10 days, the minister said.

He also urged the industry to channel their CSR funds for Covid-related activities, as the Centre has allowed the use of CSR funds for such causes. "More than the funds, the government is looking for technology, know-how and contacts for sourcing medicines and medical equipment," he said.

He also sought the help of CII to identify and procure Remdesivir and Tocilizomab injections from other countries.

Shortage of doctors

Dr Devi Shetty pointed at the rising shortage of doctors with the increasing number of Covid cases. "Currently, all the headlines are on oxygen shortage. But, very soon, the headlines will focus on shortage of doctors and nurses," he said. He urged the Health Minister to work with the Union Government to augment medical staff by roping in 2.2 lakh nursing students in the country, who are waiting for their final exams.

Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar holds a meeting with health department officials and eminent citizens in Bengaluru on Sunday | EXPRESS

Mangaluru running low on Covaxin

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A prominent Bengalurean said, "We have been trying to get the Covishield vaccination in our apartment complex, but the hospitals insist that they need minimum numbers. We are waiting for May 1 when those aged above 18 become eligible so that we can get the required numbers," he said. Similar is the situation according to the Bangalore Apartments' Federation. Several people had to do the rounds of several hospitals in the city and wait for hours to get the jab.

The situation is no different in government Primary Health Care Centres. Many complained that the PHC in Agara and a couple of other PHCs in the city had run out of stock of Covishield and they were asked to return the next day.

Meanwhile, in Mangaluru of Dakshina Kannada district, there were complaints of shortage of Covaxin. Many several PHCs across the district reported that they had no stock of Covaxin. Those seeking a jab were sent back and the authorities say that it is due to the limited supply to the state. The problem is compounded as the vaccines are not interchangeable.

A 48-year-old resident of Kapikad said he went to the Bejai PHC on Saturday to get Covaxin along with his wife, but they were told that there was no stock.

CONFUSION COMPOUNDED

Look before you forward! Fake info adds to Covid distress

KARTHIK K K @Mysuru

WHILE there is enough confusion on the availability of oxygen and the crucial drug Remdesivir, in these times of shortage, fake messages on social media platforms are only adding to the citizens' ordeal.

Shashank, a B.Sc graduate from Mysuru who was asked by hospital authorities to arrange a vial of Remdesivir injection for his father, sought help from his social media friends. "Within minutes, I got more than 10 responses as friends shared numbers of many individuals and organisations from Mysuru who would help arrange Remdesivir. I tried calling all of them and discovered that they were wrong numbers or just not reachable," he said.

While social media is flooded with appeals for urgent needs and many are connecting online and getting help, there is a lot of misinformation floating around, with fake forwards, unverified and invalid numbers being shared, claiming they would arrange oxygen and drugs.

A few miscreants are tweaking actual posts or replacing contact numbers with random numbers and circulating messages on social media, which is only adding to the distress.

TNIE rang up several numbers mentioned on social media, which claimed to provide oxygen cylinders for Rs 400, besides Remdesivir. The numbers either connected to the wrong people or were not in use.

Experts and senior police personnel from the cyber crime unit pointed out that cyber criminals might make the most of the pandemic as there is increased digital user presence and many people depend on messages and numbers circulating on social media, claiming to help Covid patients.

Meanwhile, social media strategists and experts suggest that district administration officials come up with a centralised number and promote this on social media, as it will be of immense help to those in need.

CRITICAL STATE The health of former minister and leader of Janadhipathya Samrakshana Samithi (JSS) in Kerala, K R Gouri Amma, who is aged 102, continued to be critical on Sunday

Grim scene as Kerala adds one lakh Covid-19 cases in six days

As many as 28,469 people tested positive on Sunday, in the State's highest single-day spike; The test positivity rate also recorded a new high of 22.46 per cent

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@T'puram

THE number of Covid-19 patients in hospital treatment in the State crossed the two-lakh mark on Sunday. The latest one lakh patients were added in just six days. The number of patients has increased more than eightfold from just a month ago when the test positivity rate was below 4 per cent.

The test positivity rate also recorded a new high of 22.46 per cent and it was in line with the expert prediction that the daily patients would increase till the middle of May.

Ernakulam remained the worst affected with over 35,000 patients in treatment. It is followed by Kozhikode (nearly 30,000) and Malappuram (just under 22,000). The health authorities have taken steps to increase the number of Covid-19 beds in the State to meet the challenges in the coming days. The Thiruvananthapuram Medical College increased its bed capacity from 486 to 1400 by the end of April. As many as 28,469 people were tested positive on the day. The total number of people testing positive for the infection has crossed 14 lakhs. There were 30 deaths, taking the total toll to 5110.

Meanwhile, with only a week left for the counting of votes for the 2021 Assembly polls, the Election Commission (EC) has come out with a set of strict regulations adhering to Covid-19 protocol for the process. Special focus will be given to counting stations in Ernakulam, where Covid-19 cases have been skyrocketing, said Deputy Collector (Election) Geo T Manoj. The counting of votes will begin at 8am on May 2. The postal ballots will be counted first, followed by EVM votes from 8.30 am. Counting officers will be given masks and face shields. The officers and counting agents will also be handed sanitisers.

(With inputs from Kochi)

With weekend restrictions in place in Kerala, a priest prays outside the St Peter's Chapel in Kochi on Sunday | A SANESH

> **Special focus will be given to counting stations in Ernakulam, where Covid-19 cases have been skyrocketing**
>
> Geo T Manoj, Deputy Collector (Election) on May 2 counting

'K'taka govt must scale up vax drive before 3rd wave'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"THE people and the government let their guard down, which has led to such a rise in cases. Instead of cooperating with the government, restaurants, hotels, cinema theatres, gyms etc., demanded relaxations and became super spreaders of the virus, where norms were not strictly adhered to," Dr Giridhara R Babu pointed out.

Before the third wave hits, the government should scale up the vaccination drive though it does not ensure immunity, but reduces the severity of cases and case fatality rate, Dr Babu suggested.

Private Hospitals And Nursing homes Association (PHANA) president-elect Dr Govindaiah Yatish said the reason for such a sharp rise in cases, especially in Bengaluru, is because of the highly infective nature of the mutant strains of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Even as the virus mutants were spreading, people had already become casual after the first wave had waned. They became over-confident, and the government also let its guard down, which lead to the surge in cases. Along with the system, citizens are also to blame.

"There is no harm (in having another lockdown), one will not lose anything by staying at home for two months. There is no need to step out, unless absolutely essential. Even during this weekend lockdown and night curfew, instead of cooperating with the government, many sectors demanded relaxations. And mind you, it is these sectors which were the super spreaders of the virus — like eateries, tea joints, cigarette vendors and so on," he said. "Other states and countries too have opted for lockdowns to increase facilities and break the chain to control the second wave," Dr Yatish noted.

Senior government doctors involved in management of quarantine and home isolation during the first wave, told *TNIE* on condition of anonymity that it was the State Government which failed at every step. "They became complacent in testing and tracking. Earlier, the thrust was on Covid care centres (CCCs). Now, the thrust is on home isolation, but there is no watch on the (home isolated) person. He or she is becoming a super spreader as they are seen moving around from the third to fifth day of infection instead of being in home isolation for 17 days," said a frustrated senior doctor.

Another expert warned, "If the situation continues this way, then in four to five months' time, at least 60 per cent of the city's population will be infected!"

NIA court rejects bail to 18 accused in DJ Halli case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

A Special Court for National Investigation Agency (NIA) cases rejected bail for 18 persons accused of being involved in the DJ Halli riots, and booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Two separate petitions were filed by the accused before the court, and both were rejected by Special Court judge Kasanappa Naik, on Friday.

The accused, Syed Khalid, Mudasir Ahmed, Syed Mubarak alias Dicchi Mubarak, Mohammed Thousif, Shabaz M, Arif Pasha, Farooq, Shameel Pasha and Tanveer Khan had filed a petition seeking bail, and their advocate had argued that the petitioners were not members of any terrorist organisation. The petition said that police, without proper investigation, were acting in a biased manner against them. The prosecution had objected to bail by submitting offences committed by each accused.

The court stated that it was clearly not a simple case of rioting, but there was a conspiracy to commit the offences by the accused. "...the accused have gone to the extent of toppling the vehicle of the DCP and also burning a number of motorcycles of police personnel and private parties. These and other accused have caused extensive damage to the police station."

The other petition was filed by Syed Ikramuddin alias Syed Naveed, Shaikh Muhammed Bilal, Syed Asif, Mohammed Atif, Mohammed Mudassir Kaleem, Naqeeb Pasha, Imran Ahmed, Mohammed Azhar, and Kareem alias Saddam, but the court stated the allegations against the petitioners is serious and rejected the bail application.

The court had stated that it was clearly not a simple case of rioting | FILE

Second wave set to ruin expats' homecoming, again

AMIYA MEETHAL @ Kozhikode

KAMAL, 44, is a schoolteacher in Doha. Living with his wife and two children for over a decade there, he normally comes home during the annual vacation -- between June and August. Last year, the novel coronavirus outbreak denied his family that pleasure for the first time. And now, a virulent second wave of Covid-19 is threatening a repeat.

"I have to attend to the hospital needs of my aged parents back home in Karunagappally. They haven't taken the first dose of vaccination as there is none to help," Kamal laments.

Last year, he had booked an Air India Express ticket in January for travel in June but could not. This year, he is looking forward to travelling on the same ticket which has an extended validity till December 2021. But soaring cases and the increasing restrictions in both countries make his journey uncertain.

Shanavaz K P, 33, of Purameri near Vadakara, had returned from Dubai for his father's urgent surgery. He was supposed to go back on April 30. But the UAE suspended flights from India from April 25 for 10 days, and he had to advance the journey at a cost of more than four times the normal flight charge.

"The Covid outbreak affected expatriates financially. We had to distribute grocery kits to even affluent families. This time, it is going to be worse," said Rayees Ali, secretary, Qatar Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre (KMCC).

> **The Covid outbreak affected expatriates financially. We had to distribute grocery kits to even affluent families. This time, it is going to be worse**
>
> Rayees Ali, KMCC secretary

"More than ₹6,000 has to be spent to take the Covid test in Qatar to board the flight with a negative certificate obtained within 72 hours. On arrival, another test is required and people have to undergo a seven-day home quarantine even if the result is negative. Further, Kerala is under a lockdown situation. Most importantly, expatriates fear for their jobs if they are unable to get back in time," Ali added.

According to N K Kunhammed, a Loka Kerala Sabha member and patron of the Overseas Malayali Association (ORMA) in Dubai, the homecoming of expatriates is in trouble.

Kunhammed added that a few months ago, expatriates returning to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar had to spend a 14-day quarantine in Dubai which burned their pockets.

"We somehow managed accommodation and food for a few of them. Travel agencies are fleecing expatriates under the cover of Covid," he pointed out. Shamna Sunil Kumar, a librarian in Doha, said there is no surety for an expatriate that he/she can come back in time for their jobs after going home.

2K VEHICLES SEIZED DURING CURFEW

The Bengaluru City police on Saturday seized 1,149 vehicles of those people who came out 'without valid reasons' during the weekend curfew, imposed to break the chain of Covid transmission. Meanwhile, 886 vehicles were found moving on the roads, allegedly without valid reasons, and which were then seized by the police. Among the 886 vehicles, 841 were two-wheelers, 20 three-wheelers, and 24 four-wheelers. Police have also booked 16 cases against shops and commercial establishments under the NDMA Act.

3 HELD FOR SELLING REMDESIVIR IN BLACK

Jigani police on Sunday arrested a 33-year-old doctor and receptionist of a private hospital, after they were caught trying to sell Remdesivir vials for Rs 15,000 in black. The arrested have been identified as Dr Farman Ali, a resident of Austin Town, and Rakshith V Salian, working as a receptionist. Based on a tipoff, the police went to the hospital and nabbed them. They seized two bottles of the injection, and also booked Dr Hiremath, head of the hospital, and charged the trio under various Sections of the Drug Control Act.

Hampi Badavi Linga temple chief priest Krishna Bhat passes away at 90

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR
@Hosapete

K N Krishna Bhat, chief priest of Badavi Linga temple in Hampi for nearly four decades, breathed his last on Sunday morning. He was 90 years old.

Bhat was staying with his family in Hampi, after moving here nearly 40 years ago. He was appointed priest of Badavi Linga temple, a landmark in Hampi.

Located next to the Ugra Narasimha temple, it is famous for the large Shivalinga submerged in water.

Several people, including family members of the Vijayanagara dynasty, guides from Hampi and politicians from the region expressed grief over the priest's demise.

Bhat was dedicated to his duty, and would make the rounds of the temple even when in bad health.

He would start his day at 5 am and reach the temple by 6 am, returning home only in the evening, after performing puja, posing for photographers and tourists.

Prakash K, senior guide, said that Bhat was a familiar face in Hampi. In fact, every visitor would come looking for him. "He was also famous with photographers. His passing is a big loss to tourists and devotees," he said.

"He lived in Prakash Nagar in Hampi, and would walk to the temple every day. He had been unwell for a few days, and his family was reluctant to send him to the temple due to the worsening pandemic situation," Prakash added.

Social Welfare Minister B Sriramulu condoled the death of Krishna Bhat and said he would be missed by all who visit Hampi. "Thanks to Bhat, the Badavi Linga temple has become a great attraction among tourists in Hampi. In these tough times, we are with the family," Sriramulu said.

Hampi Badavi Linga priest K N Krishna Bhat | SHIVASHANKAR BANAGAR

JAILED JOURNALIST

Kappan's wife: CM's intervention needed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Malappuram

RIHANATH, wife of Sidhique Kappan, on Sunday asked Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to immediately intervene into the gross human rights violations against the journalist imprisoned in UP jail and ensure better hospital facilities for him who has tested positive for Covid-19.

"Kappan was chained to the hospital bed and is not even allowed to go to toilet. He sustained a major injury on chin, so that he is not able to eat anything. Kappan, who has comorbidities, tested positive for Covid 19 on April 21. He is a diabetic and his health condition is deteriorating. The authorities should give priority to improve the health condition of my husband, so that we would not lose him," Rihanath said.

Kappan was arrested by the Uttar Pradesh police on October 5 last year, while he was en route to Hathras to report the alleged gangrape of a 19-year-girl.

RARE FIND

Grey amber washes up on Murudeshwara beach

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @Karwar

A piece of hardened substance found on Murudeshwara beach in Uttara Kannada district has thrilled marine biology experts. The substance is said to be grey amber – the vomit of a sperm whale – found for the first time along the State's coast and considered pivotal for research..

A fisherman on a stroll in Murudeshwar came across a pungent smell, which kindled his curiosity. He traced the smell to a stone-like substance on the shore.

Considering it unusual, he contacted experts in the Department of Marine Biology in Karwar, who identified it as 'ambergris', the vomit of sperm whale. He was advised to hand it over to the Forest department.

"He found it on Murudeshwara beach, and it is now in our custody. Fishermen keep finding something unique which they hand over to us," said Ranganath, Range Forest Officer, Manke.

Ambergris or grey amber is said to be rare, and has been found for the first time on the coast.

The sperm whale is considered a rare sighting along the State's coast, and the last time it was sighted was in 2010 near Devbagh.

"Ambergris is of very high commercial value. It is preserved and dried to be used in the perfume industry," said Shivakumar Haragi, Assistant Professor, Department of Marine Biology, Karnatak University, Dharwad.

A close view of ambergris found by a fisherman at Murudeshwar | EXPRESS

Ambergris is formed from a secretion of the bile duct of the sperm whale. "It is normally the waste of giant squids or cuttlefish, which is semi-digested waste. The whale disposes it as vomit or as faecal material, and is usually found floating in the sea and is washed up on the coast. The waste has been found with undigested bones of cuttlefish," informed Prof Haragi.

Ambergris is normally found in Brazil, South Africa, Japan, Australia and the Moluccan Islands. It turns light in weight after several years and changes colour.

Found in various shapes and sizes, ambergris ranges between 15g and 50kg in weight.

ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಕನ್ನಡ ಸಹಕಾರಿ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟ ನಿಯಮಿತ,
(FSSC 22000 Ver 5.0 CERTIFIED ORGANISATION)
ಮಂಗಳೂರು ಡೇರಿ ಆವರಣ, ಕುಲಶೇಖರ, ಮಂಗಳೂರು - 575 005 ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: (0824) 2231515

ಸಂ:ದಕಾಒ:ಆಡಳಿತ:311:41:609:2021-22 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 23.04.2021

: ಸಂಕ್ಷಿಪ್ತ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ :

ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಕನ್ನಡ ಸಹಕಾರಿ ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಒಕ್ಕೂಟವು ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಕನ್ನಡ ಮತ್ತು ಉಡುಪಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗಳ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಪ್ರದೇಶದಿಂದ ಹಾಲನ್ನು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿ, ಸಂಸ್ಕರಿಸಿ ಉತ್ಕೃಷ್ಟ ಗುಣಮಟ್ಟದ ವಿವಿಧ ಹಾಲಿನ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳನ್ನು ತಯಾರಿಕೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಪಾಶ್ಚರೀಕರಿಸಿದ 'ನಂದಿನಿ' ಹಾಲು ಮತ್ತು ಹಾಲಿನ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳನ್ನು ಗ್ರಾಹಕರಿಗೆ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡುವ FSSC 22000 Ver 5.0 ದೃಢೀಕರಣ ಪ್ರಮಾಣಪತ್ರ ಮತ್ತು FSSAI ಆಹಾರ ಸುರಕ್ಷತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಕರಣೆ ಕಾಯಿದೆ 2006, ನಿಯಮ 2011 ರನ್ವಯ ನೋಂದಾವಣೆಯಾಗಿ ಲೈಸನ್ಸ್ ಹೊಂದಿದ ಹಾಗೂ ನ್ಯಾಷನಲ್ ಡೇರಿ ಡೆವಲಪ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಬೋರ್ಡ್ ವತಿಯಿಂದ 'ಕ್ವಾಲಿಟಿ ಮಾರ್ಕ್' ಪ್ರಮಾಣ ಪತ್ರವನ್ನು ಹಾಗೂ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಮಟ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿ "ಎಕ್ಸೆಲೆನ್ಸಿ ಅವಾರ್ಡ್" ಪಡೆದ ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಿತ ಸಹಕಾರಿ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಚರಣೆಯನ್ನು ಬಲಪಡಿಸಲು ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ನಮೂದಿಸಿದ ಖಾಲಿ ಇರುವ ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳನ್ನು ನೇರ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಮೂಲಕ ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಲು ಅರ್ಹ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಂದ Online ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳು, ವೇತನ ಶ್ರೇಣಿ, ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಮತ್ತು ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಹತೆ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಈ ಕೆಳಗೆ ನಮೂದಿಸಿದೆ.

ಕ್ರ. ಸಂ	ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ಹೆಸರು	ವೇತನ ಶ್ರೇಣಿ	ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ	ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಹತೆ
01.	ಸಹಾಯಕ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕರು (ಪ.ಸಂ/ಕ್ಯ.ಗ)	ರೂ. 52650-97100	07	ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾನೂನು ರೀತ್ಯಾ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿತವಾದ ಮಾನ್ಯತೆ ಪಡೆದ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದಿಂದ ಪಶುವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನದಲ್ಲಿ B.V.Sc./B.V.Sc& AH ಪದವೀಧರರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು.
02.	ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕಾಧಿಕಾರಿ (ಡಿ.ಟಿ)	ರೂ. 43100-83900	04	ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾನೂನು ರೀತ್ಯಾ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿತವಾದ ಮಾನ್ಯತೆ ಪಡೆದ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದಿಂದ ನೀಡಲಾಗುವ ಬಿ.ಎಸ್.ಸಿ (ಡಿ.ಟಿ) ಅಥವಾ ಬಿ.ಟೆಕ್ (ಡಿ.ಟೆಕ್) ಅಥವಾ ಕೇಂದ್ರೀಯ ಆಹಾರ ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯಿಂದ (Central Food Technology Research Institution) ಎಂ.ಎಸ್ಸಿ ಇನ್ ಫುಡ್ ಟೆಕ್ನಾಲಜಿ (M.Sc in Food Technology) ಪದವೀಧರರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು.
03.	ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕಾಧಿಕಾರಿ (ಪರಿಸರ)	ರೂ. 43100-83900	01	ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾನೂನು ರೀತ್ಯಾ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿತವಾದ ಮಾನ್ಯತೆ ಪಡೆದ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದಿಂದ B.E in Environment ಅಥವಾ B.E in Chemical ಅಥವಾ M.Sc. in Environment Science ಪದವೀಧರರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು.
04.	ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ (ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್)	ರೂ. 43100-83900	01	ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾನೂನು ರೀತ್ಯಾ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿತವಾದ ಮಾನ್ಯತೆ ಪಡೆದ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದಿಂದ ಮೆಕ್ಯಾನಿಕಲ್ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ (B.E/B.Tech) ಪದವೀಧರರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು.
05.	ವಿಸ್ತರಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ದರ್ಜೆ -3	ರೂ. 33450-62600	08	**ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಹಕಾರ ಸಂಘದ ಅರ್ಹ ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿಗಳಿಂದ: (ಹಾಲು ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳು)** ಪದವೀಧರರಾಗಿದ್ದು ಅಂದರೆ ಎಸ್.ಎಸ್.ಎಲ್.ಸಿ., ಪಿ.ಯು.ಸಿ., ಪದವಿಯೊಂದಿಗೆ (10+2+3) ಹಾಲು ಉತ್ಪಾದಕರ ಸಹಕಾರ ಸಂಘದಲ್ಲಿ ಕನಿಷ್ಠ ಮೂರು ವರ್ಷ ಸೇವೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಿರಬೇಕು. ಪ್ರಸ್ತುತ ಒಂದು ವರ್ಷದಿಂದ ಸಂಘದ ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿಯಾಗಿ ಸೇವೆಯಲ್ಲಿರಬೇಕು. **ಇತರ ಅಭ್ಯರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಂದ: (ಹಾಲು ಹುದ್ದೆಗಳು)** ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾನೂನು ರೀತ್ಯಾ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿತವಾದ ಮಾನ್ಯತೆ ಪಡೆದ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ಪದವಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪದವೀಧರರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು.
06.	ಡೈರಿಸೂಪರ್‌ವೈಸರ್ ದರ್ಜೆ-2	ರೂ. 33450-62600	05	ಯಾವುದೇ ಅಂಗೀಕೃತ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಪರೀಕ್ಷಾ ಮಂಡಳಿಯಿಂದ ಮೆಕ್ಯಾನಿಕಲ್/ಸಿವಿಲ್/ ಇಲೆಕ್ಟ್ರಿಕಲ್ ಮತ್ತು ಇಲೆಕ್ಟ್ರಾನಿಕ್ಸ್/ ಇಲೆಕ್ಟ್ರಾನಿಕ್ಸ್ ಮತ್ತು ಕಮ್ಯೂನಿಕೇಷನ್ಸ್ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಷಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಡಿಪ್ಲೋಮಾದಲ್ಲಿ ತೇರ್ಗಡೆಯಾಗಿರಬೇಕು.
07.	ಆಡಳಿತ/ಮಾರುಕಟ್ಟೆ ಸಹಾಯಕರು ದರ್ಜೆ-2	ರೂ. 27650-52650	10	ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾನೂನು ರೀತ್ಯಾ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿತವಾದ ಮಾನ್ಯತೆ ಪಡೆದ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದಿಂದ ಯಾವುದೇ ಪದವಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪದವೀಧರರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು.
08.	ಕೆಮಿಸ್ಟ್ ದರ್ಜೆ-2	ರೂ. 27650-52650	12	ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾನೂನು ರೀತ್ಯಾ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿತವಾದ ಮಾನ್ಯತೆ ಪಡೆದ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದಿಂದ ರಸಾಯನಶಾಸ್ತ್ರ ವಿಷಯವನ್ನು ಐಚ್ಛಿಕ ವಿಷಯವಾಗಿ ಹೊಂದಿರುವ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನ ಪದವಿ B.Sc ಅಥವಾ B.Sc in Micro Biology ಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪದವೀಧರರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು.
09.	ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಸಹಾಯಕರು ದರ್ಜೆ-2	ರೂ. 27650-52650	02	ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾನೂನು ರೀತ್ಯಾ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿತವಾದ ಮಾನ್ಯತೆ ಪಡೆದ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯದಿಂದ ಬಿ.ಕಾಂ/ಬಿ.ಬಿ.ಎ./ಬಿ.ಬಿ.ಎಮ್ (B.Com/BBA/BBM) ಪದವೀಧರರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು.
10.	ಕಿರಿಯ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕರು	ರೂ. 21400-42000	30	S.S.L.C ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತೇರ್ಗಡೆಯಾಗಿರಬೇಕು. ಅದರೊಂದಿಗೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ಅಂಗೀಕೃತ ಕೈಗಾರಿಕಾ ತರಬೇತಿ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ/ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳಿಂದ ರೆಫ್ರಿಜರೇಷನ್ ಎಂಡ್ ಎ.ಸಿ ಮೆಕ್ಯಾನಿಕ್ (ಎಂ.ಆರ್.ಎ.ಸಿ.)/ ಫಿಟ್ಟರ್/ವೆಲ್ಡರ್/ ಇಲೆಕ್ಟ್ರೀಷಿಯನ್/ ಇಲೆಕ್ಟ್ರಾನಿಕ್ಸ್ /ಇಲೆಕ್ಟ್ರಾನಿಕ್ಸ್ ಮೆಕ್ಯಾನಿಕ್ ವಿಷಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ (Engineering Trades) ಎರಡು ವರ್ಷಗಳ I.T.I. (National Trade Certificate) ತೇರ್ಗಡೆಯಾಗಿರಬೇಕು ಮತ್ತು ಒಂದು ವರ್ಷದ ಶಿಶಿಕ್ಷು ತರಬೇತಿ ಹೊಂದಿರಬೇಕು. **ಬಾಯ್ಲರ್ ಟ್ರೇಡ್:** S.S.L.C ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತೇರ್ಗಡೆಯಾಗಿರಬೇಕು. ಅದರೊಂದಿಗೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರವು ನಡೆಸುವ ದ್ವಿತೀಯ ದರ್ಜೆ ಬಾಯ್ಲರ್ ಆಪರೇಟರ್ಸ್ ಸರ್ಟಿಫಿಕೇಟ್ ಆಫ್ ಕಾಂಪಿಟೆನ್ಸಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತೇರ್ಗಡೆಯಾಗಿರಬೇಕು. ಅಥವಾ ತತ್ಸಮಾನ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಹತೆ ಹೊಂದಿರಬೇಕು.

ವಯೋಮಿತಿ, ಮೀಸಲಾತಿ ವರ್ಗೀಕರಣ, ಶುಲ್ಕ, ಅಯ್ಕೆ ವಿಧಾನ, ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ವಿಧಾನ ಮತ್ತು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳು, ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಒಳಗೊಂಡ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ, ವಿವಿಧ ಸಮೂಹಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಇತರೆ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಒಳಗೊಂಡ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ www.dkmul.com ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ Career Menu ಕ್ಲಿಕ್ ಮಾಡಿ, ಅದರಲ್ಲಿರುವ ವಿವರವಾದ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯನ್ನು ಓದಿ, ತದನಂತರ Apply Online ಲಿಂಕ್‌ನ್ನು ಕ್ಲಿಕ್ ಮಾಡಿ, ಆನ್‌ಲೈನ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಮುದ್ರಾಗಿ /ಅಂಚೆ ಮೂಲಕ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಅವಕಾಶವಿರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ, ಮುದ್ರಾಗಿ /ಅಂಚೆ ಮೂಲಕ ಬರುವ ಅರ್ಜಿಗಳನ್ನು ತಿರಸ್ಕರಿಸಲಾಗುವುದೆಂದು ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟಪಡಿಸಿದೆ.

Online ಮೂಲಕ ಅರ್ಜಿಯನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾಗುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 28-04-2021, Online ಮೂಲಕ ಅರ್ಜಿಯನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 28-05-2021, Online ಅರ್ಜಿ ಶುಲ್ಕವನ್ನು ಪಾವತಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 29-05-2021, ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ.

ಸಹಿ/- ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು

EDITORIAL

"The whole spirit of Bitcoin is to provide a trusted system in a distrusted environment, the internet, and those technologies will provide us new capabilities and a lot more peace of mind" — Jack Dorsey

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.
— Ramnath Goenka

INDIA GETS TO SEE THE UGLY FACE OF U.S. SELFISHNESS

At the first-ever Quad summit in early March, when the weather was balmy and the national corona curve was just beginning to misbehave, it was resolved to strengthen India's 'pharmacy of the world' to manufacture up to a billion Covid vaccine doses for the Indo-Pacific by 2022-end. Amid all the euphoria that day about the four-nation grouping coming of age, Adar Poonawalla, CEO of Serum Institute of India, urged the Biden administration to walk the talk by first lifting the US embargo on export of raw materials for producing vaccines. Weeks of ambivalence followed, by which time Poonawalla's call reached its crescendo. Last week, the US state department was rather blunt in saying it will use all mechanisms to protect Americans first before opening the humanitarian door abroad. That included export embargoes and sitting on millions of doses, including those produced by AstraZeneca and J&J that it doesn't intend to use but continue to be part of its massive stockpile. Its refusal to also ease patent norms of the jab falls into the same narrow framework.

One of the talking points of the Quad when China had similarly shut itself up after its first wave of the virus was to create alternative global supply chains for greater good so that manufacturing continues uninterrupted. But by holding back export of raw materials for vaccine production, the US is disrupting the very same global supply chain it committed the Quad to protect. With the priorities of the Biden administration getting clear, the false sense of comfort Indians had in Kamala Harris—with roots in Tamil Nadu—getting elected as US vice president is also unravelling. Late on Sunday night, the White House announced releasing of raw materials for producing Covishield, a decision it ought to have taken much earlier.

As for India, foreign minister S Jaishankar defended its earlier export of 60 million doses, arguing that it was largely to oil the global supply chains. A proud nation like India does not send SOS messages but responds to them. Yet, Jaishankar's recent tweet urging the 'world to support India, as India supports the world' had an SOS ring to it. While other nations are reaching out, US selfishness is showing.

PREPARING FOR THE WORST IN ODISHA

In the midst of India's frightening surge in Covid cases, the situation in Odisha appears to be low key at present. But make no mistake, the state is bracing for the worst too. For the last four days, it has been logging over 6,000 cases. When the first wave unleashed itself last year, the state hit the peak on September 25 with the highest daily caseload of 4,356. That was a gradual rise, but the current wave has been at a cracking speed—from 394 daily cases on April 1 to 6,116 on April 25. The state's total tally now stands at 4,07,457. What is of concern, however, is its test positivity rate (TPR) of 16%, almost on par with the national daily average. At present, special focus must be on the 10 districts bordering Chhattisgarh, where the transmission has shown no signs of a let-up. The TPR in some of these districts is well over 30%. The Naveen Patnaik government has activated hospitals and oxygen-supported beds as the demand for hospitalisation has picked up pace. Similarly alarming has been the scenario in Khurda, the seat of the state's administration, where the TPR is 23%. Besides, most critical patients from different parts get referred to Bhubaneswar due to the concentration of health infrastructure. With the capital city also reporting a high number of cases, steps must be taken to avoid chaos at all cost.

The Odisha government already has over 12,000 beds in place in 70 dedicated Covid hospitals. It plans to add another 8,000 in such facilities apart from over 50,000 beds in Covid care centres. Currently, just about 25% general beds are occupied whereas 30% ICUs and 16% ventilators are in use since 3,000-odd patients have been admitted while the rest of the 42,000 confirmed cases are in home isolation. Cases in Odisha are expected to peak by the end of this month and the first week of May, which means the numbers would continue to swell. This wave has been unpredictable and shattered old patterns. The government must be fully prepared to avoid a replay of Delhi, Gujarat or Maharashtra. It is also equally important that it ramps up its daily testing numbers to understand the actual spread of the transmission so that it can remain ahead of the curve.

Today, the BJP and the government are obsessed only with decimating the opposition. A state that cannot provide for supply of oxygen in emergencies is akin to a failed state

COVID CRISIS IN OUR NATION: A SAGA OF FAILURES

KAPIL SIBAL
Senior lawyer, Congress leader and member of Rajya Sabha

AMIT BANDRE

This government has been both clueless and careless in handling the Covid crisis. Its careless ways border on criminal negligence. Its unpreparedness in dealing with the second wave of Covid-19 has exposed its utter disdain for the concerns of those afflicted and those likely to be affected in days to come. Yet, I must admire the energy our prime minister has showcased in the electoral battle for West Bengal and Assam. However, that energy is woefully missing in the nation's battle to deal with a pandemic that has thus far cost almost two lakh lives.

Healthcare and education are the foundation of human empowerment. Both have been neglected by this government since 2014. India's gross national expenditure on research and development has been stagnant at 0.7% of GDP in comparison to Israel (4.6%) South Korea (4.5%), Japan (3.2%), Germany (3%), the US (2.8%), France (2.2%), China (2.1%) and Brazil (1.3%). This is so when India's per capita GDP is far lower when compared to developed economies. In healthcare, we should be discovering molecules through R&D rather than becoming the factory of the world for drugs discovered by others. Our global ranking in the 2019 EU Industrial R&D scorecard is abysmal. Only 13 Indian entities figure in the list of 2,500 entities included in the scorecard. Absent massive public support for R&D to both public and private enterprises in healthcare, we will find ourselves dependent on others for both vaccines and drugs. We will be clueless when confronted with a health emergency like the present.

How can we ever be proud of a nation that cannot even provide oxygen to save lives? It is the most fundamental of all human needs. A state that cannot provide for its supply in emergencies is akin to a failed state. The fact that supply of oxygen has become a subject matter of quotas shows the utter insensitivity of an establishment that never thought of tomorrow in pandemic times. Today, the BJP and the government are obsessed only with the task of decimating the opposition. The carelessness with which this government has approached the Covid crisis is a saga of failures.

It all started with the sudden belated ill-conceived lockdown the prime minister announced on 24 March 2020. Lakhs of migrants desperate to reach home were stranded without hope. An uncaring government failed to provide them adequate facilities, both in terms of food, shelter and transportation to help them reach home. The tragic stories of their 'journey home' are yet to be told. Yet our government failed to prepare for the next wave of the pandemic. When it came, it was caught napping.

Any enlightened and alert administration should have done the following. One, test all its people. Two, ensure adequate stocks of vaccines for all (the UK, US and Israel had already planned for stockpiles to be used when needed. Vaccine manufacturers were already locked into contracts with countries for sufficient stockpiles). Three, increase capacities for production of vaccines within the country. We relied on SII's Covishield and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin to meet our needs. They too were not funded to ramp up capacity. Four, procure or provide for a mechanism that allows our citizens access to vaccines by Pfizer, Moderna, Sputnik and Johnson & Johnson. Five, allow all to be vaccinated by WHO-cleared vaccines under emergency conditions. None of this was planned.

Though the government was ill-prepared for adequate supply of vaccines, emergency measures should have been put in place in advance for creating facilities for the next wave of the pandemic given the evidence of it in other countries. For that, the state should have provided for testing facilities as and when needed. Next, there should have been provision of enough ICU and CCU beds in hospitals. Supply of oxygen wherever and whenever needed should also have been geared up. Yet none of this was planned for the current eventuality. The second wave is spreading panic and those afflicted are facing crippling shortage of required medical care.

> How can we ever be proud of a nation that cannot even provide oxygen to save lives? It is the most fundamental of all human needs. The fact that supply of oxygen has become a subject matter of quotas shows the utter insensitivity of the establishment

Instead we saw members of the ruling party saying "*Kumbh ki aastha coronavirus se bahut badi hai*" (faith of Kumbh is above coronavirus). The chief minister of Uttarakhand said, "Nobody will be stopped in the name of Covid-19 as we are sure that the faith in God will overcome the fear of the virus." Ironically, Rawat himself was found to be Covid-19 positive a few days thereafter. The hunger for power was so great that the Assam health minister in public meetings stated that "there is no need to wear a mask" in the state. Our prime minister, apart from addressing public meetings, also welcomed people to the Kumbh, knowing fully well that in such gatherings, neither social distancing nor wearing of masks could be monitored.

The 'Tablighi villains' were demonised by the media and the BJP. There are no villains today. Elections cannot wait. Maybe, they felt, the virus can! The result: 3,49,691 coronavirus cases as of April 24, the highest one-day tally ever, globally. Maharashtra and Delhi are witnessing the highest-ever one-day spikes.

Today, the pyres of those who have fallen victim to the pandemic continue to burn. Hospitals have officially complained about the non-availability of oxygen for their patients. People are waiting for supply of oxygen for their family members who are in ICU. Cylinders of the dead are being snatched by family members to provide succour to those who are still alive. Those in power are merrily campaigning for victory.

I remember Modi's speech in Varanasi on 23 September 2017 when he said, "I belong to a different school of thought. I do not think of vote bank. For me, my country is bigger than my party. For us, governance is not about politics or winning elections. Our priority lies in the well-being of the nation". We now know the truth. He belongs to a different school of thought where vote bank politics is higher than the well-being of the nation.

(Tweets @KapilSibal)

FROM EVMs TO BLOCKCHAIN-BASED E-VOTING?

ATANU BISWAS
Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata

Will the much-discussed EVMs be placed in museums in the near future? Is the electoral infrastructure of the country going to be digitised further, with the possibility of remote voting coming around the corner? In fact, the Election Commission of India is doing a blockchain project with IIT-Madras and some eminent scientists. "We are very hopeful that by the 2024 Lok Sabha elections you will see a lot of fundamental differences in the way we are working, including this (e-voting)," the former Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said recently.

While cryptocurrencies are under fire in many places, blockchain is its real positive inheritance. In fact, blockchain technology is going to be widely used in land registration, enlisting stock market trading, banking and to usher in the digital economy in general. It might bring a paradigm shift in voting as well.

Starting from broken pieces of pots—*ostraka* in Greek—as ballots in ancient Greece, the voting system has evolved dramatically. While Internet voting has been practised in the digital republic of Estonia since 2005, Sierra Leone's 2018 election is an example of blockchain technology expanding its footprints in polls. Subsequently, Russia launched a blockchain-based electronic voting system pilot project and Tsukuba became the first Japanese city to introduce blockchain digital voting. And most of us didn't notice that history was created in the 2020 US presidential elections when a blockchain-based electronic voting system via a voting app called 'Voatz' was implemented in Utah county.

How is blockchain-based voting done? A recent report of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) illustrates a possible model—a straw man proposal for blockchain as a ballot box: "The voting authority, which maintains a voter registry, has each registered user create a public/private key pair, and each user sends their public key to the registry. Then, the voter registry spends one coin to each public key. To vote, each user spends their coin to the candidate of their choice. After a period, everyone can look at the blockchain, total up each candidate's coins, and select the one with the most coins as the winner." Although this may not be an ideal situation, it might help understand blockchain-based voting to some extent.

In fact, blockchain is a type of ledger of information or database that stores data in blocks that are chained together. It is distributed across various nodes (computers) on a peer-to-peer network for the purpose of ensuring integrity and verifiability of data stored on the ledger—an updated copy of the records is available to all stakeholders at all times. Once a block is filled with data, it is chained onto the previous block, which makes the data chained together in chronological order. Due to its distributed nature, it is almost impossible for a single person to hack everyone's ledger, ensuring security against cyberattacks.

Blockchain technology usually allows people to verify that their votes are recorded and counted correctly without compromising their anonymity. Moreover, anyone may be able to check the counting without the secrecy being hampered.

> While cryptocurrencies are under fire in many places, blockchain is its real positive inheritance. In fact, blockchain technology is going to be widely used in land registration, stock market trading, banking and to usher in the digital economy in general. It might bring a paradigm shift in voting as well

However, there are security concerns in blockchain-based e-voting too. The blockchain-based system used in the September 2019 city council elections of Moscow was shown to be gravely vulnerable. Also, during the online voting on the 2020 constitutional amendment in Russia, a media outlet claimed that it was possible to access and decrypt the votes stored on the blockchain due to flawed cryptographic implementation. When West Virginia piloted the 'Voatz' app during the 2018 US midterm election, there was an attempted hack on the app. The above-mentioned MIT report, while reviewing the American pilot e-voting, heavily criticised the mobile app-based system. Possibilities of targeted Denial-of-Service attacks—where an attacker would be in a position to block traffic from the system, effectively preventing, or at the very least delaying, the registration of votes—cannot be ruled out. These researchers found that Voatz's use of a third-party vendor for voter identification and verification poses potential privacy issues for users. And there's little doubt that it's difficult to prevent coercers or vote buyers in remote voting.

Not every expert is so critical. And hopefully, the Indian system would come out after considering and preventing the above mentioned and some other possible vulnerabilities. In the US, experts mostly criticised the weaknesses of the mobile app-based voting. However, will app-based remote voting be allowed in India's blockchain-based e-voting system? Maybe not. Earlier, the then Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Sandeep Saxena explained that, to cast a vote, electors would still have to physically reach a designated venue and the concept is a "two-way electronic voting system, in a controlled environment, on white-listed IP devices on dedicated internet lines, enabled with biometric devices and a web camera". It doesn't mean voting from home, which is "anytime-anywhere-any device".

The evolution of voting is imperative. Such technological moves forward are inevitable and welcome, at least for a country like India that has nearly a billion voters. Blockchain has the potential to bring transparency in voting while maintaining security and anonymity. Also, results can be gathered and processed quickly and straight after the voting is finished. The common electorate, however, might struggle to understand such a technology. In reality, common people rely much on the institutions and also on their political leaders. We know that the EVM debate got momentum repeatedly in the country. How easy will it be to bring the major political parties into confidence to avoid any possible distrust before rolling in blockchain-based technology in voting?

(appubabale@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Hold them accountable

The Karnataka health minister and government have been irresponsible (*'If we had taken steps earlier, we would be in control now'*, Apr 25). The topic of discussion in the Assembly was a CD, not building healthcare infrastructure. The present crisis has triggered outrage towards politicians. Let's all take a vow from now on to hold them accountable.
Chitra Manjunath, Bengaluru

Not time for blame games

This is not the time to blame the Union or state governments. We should fight together to come out of this pandemic keeping aside our political differences.
Abu M George, Pandalam

Coming together

Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala's call to UDF workers to set aside political differences and support the government is appreciable (*Oppn rallies behind govt in its pandemic fight*, Apr 25).
N A Joseph, Ettumanoor

All are responsible

Politicians, courts and common citizens are all to blame for wilful negligence that led to the second Covid wave. Very few wore masks for months. Then there was the government-opposition vaccine drama. There was crowding during the farmer protest. And the courts never took cognisance of any of this.
Vijayan T A, email

Welcome decision

The decision taken by this newspaper to suspend coverage of the IPL tournament is welcome. The lives of people are more important than the game in the present circumstances. When the nation is reeling due to the pandemic, the tournament should have been postponed or cancelled without waiting for the situation to worsen.
Jaya Kumara Menon, Ottapalam

Not the time for cricket

I am a cricket lover but agree that this is no time for festivals of any kind. Therefore it is a very laudable decision to suspend IPL coverage.
Prabhakar Menon, email

Filling their coffers

When the entire world is facing Covid's brunt, what is the necessity to conduct the IPL and Olympics? The cricketers and cricket boards are already earning a fortune and these tournaments are meant only to fill their coffers.
R Narayanan, Bengaluru

Being consistent

The newspaper has every right to criticise the move to continue the tournament but not covering the same doesn't make sense. To be consistent in its decision, it should then not report on sports and entertainment events all together during this period.
Thomas J Mukkadan, Kottayam

Culture of indiscipline

Among the many defects of our society, the culture of indiscipline is a major one (*Pandemic and the indisciplined Indian*, Apr 24). The exponential spread has only confirmed this as many disregard two simple but important norms: face masks and social distance. Studies suggest that if even 80% of people wear masks in public, Covid spread can be contained.
R Sivakumar, Chennai

Corrective steps

The article is lucid and convincing. I feel the author could also have offered some solutions for corrective action, however briefly.
S Nagpal, Delhi

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Sitaram Yechury @SitaramYechury
At a time of an emergency like this with an ineffectual and callous govt landing us in this mess, the job of everyone is to assist every other person

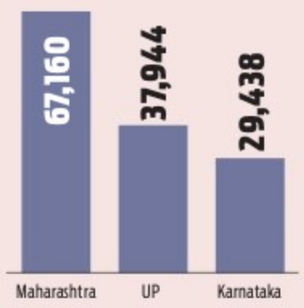
Yashwant Sinha @YashwantSinha
When people are dying left, right and centre, Kejriwal is busy promoting himself. Why does he not go and stand in front of a hospital?

Prashant Bhushan @pbhushan1
I have taken India to such heights that people need Oxygen cylinders to breathe!

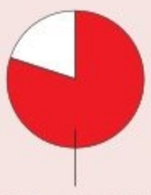
INDIA'S COVID UPDATES

3,49,691
CASES IN 24 HRS, RECORD SINGLE-DAY SURGE

NEW CASES

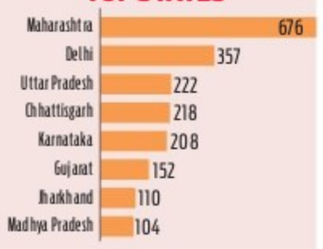


2,767
FRESH FATALITIES



80.23%
OF LATEST DEATHS IN 10 STATES

TOP STATES

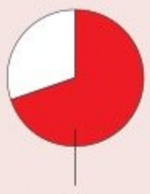


1.13% is the national mortality rate

ACTIVE CASES

26,82,751
Active cases (15.82% of total cases)

1,29,811
Net increase in active cases in 24 hours



69.94%
Of total active cases in Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Kerala

'Use chamber as Covid centre'

Bhopal: The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) has written to CJI N V Ramana urging him to convert the newly constructed advocates chamber building at Appu Ghar complex into a Covid care centre for the benefit of lawyers, court staff and their families. SCBA urged the CJI and the other senior judges to advance the summer vacation of Supreme Court in view of the pandemic.

MP O_2 tanker stuck in UP

Bhopal: An oxygen tanker carrying the life-saving gas from Jharkhand's Bokaro to Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh and stuck for hours in Uttar Pradesh will finally be able to get passage on Monday morning. According to official sources, the matter was finally resolved on Sunday evening following several phone calls from MP government to their counterparts in UP.

Beneficiaries can see shot type, cost at pvt hospitals

In phase 2, eligible persons could not see vaccine offered to them

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

BENEFICIARIES will have a choice to know the Covid-19 vaccine available at private hospitals and its cost while scheduling their appointment in phase 3 of the vaccination drive. The vaccination drive opens for all adults beginning May 1.

In phase 2, those eligible for vaccination-those above 60 years of age and then those above 45 years- could not see the vaccine offered by the vaccination centre chosen by them while fixing an appointment. As per the latest Covid-19 vaccination policy announced by the Centre, while those above 45 years can take the jabs for free at vaccination centres run by the Union government, vaccines will be available at predisclosed prices at private hospitals. State governments, on the other hand, can decide their own policies for vaccination facilities run by them.

The Centre has already said that those in the 18-44 age group can take the shots only after registering in advance, either on the CoWIN portal or on the Aarogya Setu app.

E-REGISTRATION MUST FOR 18-45 AGE GROUP

Getting registered on the CoWIN web portal and taking an appointment to get a Covid-19 vaccine jab would be mandatory for those aged between 18 and 45 years as walk-ins will not be allowed initially, official sources said on Sunday. Those above 45 years can still avail the facility of on-site registration to get vaccinated, they said. The registration will begin on CoWIN and Aarogya Setu App from April 28.

In a letter written to the states, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan has written that each private vaccination centre must declare on CoWIN, the vaccine type (s), the stocks of vaccines and the prices decided by the centre to be charged to the citizens.

"The vaccine types and their prices will be displayed in the "Appointments" module on CoWIN so that the citizens can make an informed choice at the time of booking a vaccination appointment," the letter says. On eligibility of beneficiaries, the Centre said that the states, in the event of procurement of vaccine doses directly from the manufacturers, may decide to expand the coverage from the doses so procured to reduce the cut-off age for eligibility for vaccination at the government centres.

States will have an option on the CoWIN portal for setting the minimum cut off age value for a state and in such cases, the government centres will be visible to eligible beneficiaries for booking an online appointment based on validation of the minimum cut off age, as decided by the state.

The letter also underlined that registration of the new vaccination centres should be taken up in campaign mode but said that they should fulfil the previously defined criteria such as a sufficient number of trained vaccinators and the ability to manage immediate adverse events following immunisation cases, among others.

Railways deploys isolation coaches for Covid patients in Bhopal on Sunday. MP extends 'corona curfew' in the city till May 3 | PTI

Navy deploys medical equipment in island territories

New Delhi: As part of the nation's fight against Covid-19, Indian Navy ships under the Southern Naval Command (SNC), Kochi has ferried oxygen and essential medical equipment to the UTS of Lakshadweep. A statement from the Indian Navy on Sunday said, "In the early hours today, INS Sharda, based at Kochi, undertook transfer of essential medical supplies to the capital of Union Territory of Lakshadweep, Kavaratti." The stores consisted of 35 oxygen cylinders, rapid antigen detection test kits, PPE, masks. The ship then continued with her mission to the island of Minicoy for disembarkation of oxygen cylinders and medical supplies. Similar supplies were disembarked at Androth and Agatti islands as well. Apart from the supplies, a naval contingent comprising one doctor, two medical assistants and one additional sailor reached Kadmat island on Sunday to assist the civil administration, said the Navy.

Changed policy for vax drive on states' demand, clarifies Centre

NEW DELHI: Facing criticism over its new Covid-19 vaccination policy, the Centre on Sunday said that it liberalised the coronavirus vaccination strategy following requests from nearly all states. It said that the new policy is aimed to accelerate phase 3 of the inoculation drive and offers flexibility to states, which had been asking for the same.

Explaining the Centre's stand, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said that with Covid-19 spreading like a tsunami, it was critical to ease the controls and allow a free hand to the state governments as well as the private sector. "Hence, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we decided to ease the vaccination policy norms," he wrote in a two-page open letter posted on Twitter. Under the new policy, the Centre will procure 50 per cent of the Covishield and Covaxin supplies at ₹150 per dose which will then be distributed to states to vaccinate those above 45 for free. States and private hospitals have been allowed to procure 50 per cent of the quota on their own. The vaccination drive opens for all above 18 years from May 1.

Following the shift in the policy, SII, manufacturer of Covishield, has said that its cost for states will be ₹400 per dose and ₹600 per shot for private hospitals. Covaxin by Bharat Biotech can be procured by states and private hospitals channels at ₹600 and ₹1,200 per dose respectively. *ENS*

DIP IN DEEP CRISIS

Dev Doli bath ritual underway in Haridwar on Sunday even as Uttarakhand government limits gatherings to 50 people | PTI

US green light for supply of vaccine raw material to India

PUSHKAR BANAKAR & SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

THE United States of America on Sunday said it will provide raw materials for the manufacture of Covishield in India among other aid that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken had assured the country of, earlier in the day.

The US has a ban in place on the export of raw materials for Covid vaccines and other medical equipment in order to cater to domestic demands. The ban remains.

The announcement was made by National Security Council Spokesperson Emily Horne, following a conversation between National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval.

"The US has identified sources of specific raw material urgently required for Indian manufacture of the Covishield vaccine that will immediately be made available for India.

"To help treat Covid-19 patients and protect frontline health workers in India, the United States has identified supplies of therapeutics, rapid diagnostic test kits, ventilators and PPE that will immediately be made available for India," a statement from Horne said.

Earlier in the day, Blinken had assured India of additional deployment of aid to health workers. Horne, in her statement, said the US is pursuing options relating to provide oxygen generation and related supplies on an urgent basis. She also said a team of public health advisors will be deployed from CDC.

Meanwhile, sources said that Indian ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu was taking up the matter with officials concerned and the issue also came up during talks between Blinken and India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

In response to a query by this newspaper, Pune-based Serum Institute of India had said earlier in the day that the ban does not impact Covishield production in India. The company also clarified that a tweet by its CEO Adar Poonawalla urging the US President to lift the ban was meant to ease the production of Covovax, another vaccine, for which the firm has tied up with the US-based Novavax.

SII, the biggest vaccine maker in the world by volume, is looking to launch Covovax by September and is worried that the timeline may get affected if a quick decision on lifting the ban by the US was not taken.

'Kappan chained like an animal', wife tells CJI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

RAIHANTH Kappan, the wife of Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan, has written to Chief Justice of India NV Ramana seeking his immediate release from a hospital in Mathura, alleging he is "chained like an animal in a cot" there.

Kappan, arrested last year while on the way to Hathras which was home to a young Dalit woman who died after being gangraped, is currently lodged in Medical College Hospital, Mathura, after he was found positive for Covid-19 on April 21.

Kappan's wife stated that after he had suffered a fall in the bathroom and was diagnosed with Covid, he was taken to KM Medical College, Mathura where he is being ill-treated. The plea by advocate Wills Mathew on behalf of Kappan's wife urged the court to intervene and release him from the hospital and keep him back in Mathura jail till his plea for release from jail is decided. It said that he was shifted to the hospital on April 21, where he is presently "chained like an animal in a cot of the hospital, without mobility and he neither could take food, nor could go to the toilet for the last more than 4 days, and is very critical."

"If immediate corrective steps are not taken it will result in his untimely death," the letter claimed.

"It is most respectfully prayed to take immediate steps/ pass necessary orders to release Kappan from the medical college hospital back to the Mathura Jail as interim relief," the letter said, adding that the representation given to Jail Superintendent, Mathura by message was pending.

UK to send ventilators, oxygen concentrators to India

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

AS India battles a severe second wave of coronavirus pandemic, the UK on Sunday announced sending life-saving medical equipment including ventilators and oxygen concentrator devices to the country.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said vital medical equipment, including hundreds of oxygen concentrators and ventilators, is now on its way from the UK to India to support efforts to prevent "tragic loss" of life from the "terrible virus".

The UK high commission here said the support follows a request from India and Prime Minister Johnson's pledge for the UK to do all it can to help the country.

"We stand side by side with India as a friend and partner during what is a deeply concerning time in the fight against COVID-19," Johnson was quoted in a statement released by the high commission. 'We will continue to work closely with the Indian government during this difficult time and I'm determined to make sure that the UK does everything it can to support the international community in the global fight against the pandemic," he said.

The high commission said over 600 pieces of vital medical equipment are being sent to India to support the country in its fight against Covid-19.

It said the ventilators and oxygen concentrator devices are due to leave the UK on Sunday and the first shipment is expected to arrive in Delhi early on Tuesday with further consignments reaching later this week.

"In total, nine airline container loads of supplies, including 495 oxygen concentrators, 120 non-invasive ventilators and 20 manual ventilators, will be sent to the country this week," it said.

EU TO RESPOND RAPIDLY TO INDIA'S REQUEST

The EU on Sunday said it is pooling in resources to respond rapidly to help India's fight against the fast-spreading coronavirus pandemic. A senior official of the 27-nation powerful bloc said the EU has already activated its Civil Protection Mechanism to mobilise support for India including supplying urgently needed oxygen and medicines.

Shroud the truth Deny oxygen shortage Underreport deaths GOI is doing everything... ...to save his fake image!
Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

Wrote to Union Health Minister @ drharshvardhan ji, requesting him to increase Punjab's Liquid Oxygen quota to 250 MT daily due to continuous surge of Covid-19 cases
Amarinder Singh, Punjab CM

Support and honor the warriors involved in the battle of corona. Do not store unnecessary life-saving medicines and oxygen etc. necessary for the battle
Yogi Adityanath, UP CM

15,889
FRESH CASES REPORTED IN BENGAL, HIGHEST SO FAR

Maharashtra to give free vaccine to adults below 45, float global tender

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

THE Maharashtra government has decided to provide free Covid-19 vaccines to all residents in the age group of 18 to 45 in the state from May 1.

Minister Nawab Malik said Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who is handling the finance portfolio, has instructed state chief secretary Sitaram Kunte to prepare a global tender inviting vaccine manufacturing firms to quote their rates.

"To vaccinate the age group of 18 to 45 years old in Maharashtra, we need at least 12 crore doses. The two firms in India won't be able to meet the growing demand for vaccines in the state. Therefore, we have to float a global tender and import as many as doses," Malik said.

Uddhav Thackeray is likely to make a formal announcement on the free-vaccination drive on May 1, which is observed as Maharashtra Day. State minister Aaditya Thackeray on Sunday tweeted that the state has decided to give the jabs free of cost, but later deleted the tweet saying that a formal committee will take the decision and make the announcement.

When Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray recently met the Pune-based Serum Institute of India's CEO, Adar Poonawalla, the latter had assured to supply as many doses to Maharashtra. Interestingly, Poonawalla a few days ago stated that after fulfilling the contractual obligations to the Centre, his firm will provide as many as vaccines to the home state Maharashtra.

Free jabs in Rajasthan

Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot on Sunday announced the state government will provide free coronavirus vaccine to people above 18 years of age. He said the state government will spend about ₹3,000 crore on the exercise. He said it would have been better if the Centre had agreed to incur the cost of vaccination for the age group.

Workers make PPE kits at a Mumbai factory. City reports 5,498 cases on Sunday | PTI

LOCAL POLLS IN U.P.

Voting for the third phase of the panchayat elections in Uttar Pradesh will be held on Monday with more than 3.52 lakh candidates in the fray in over 2.14 lakh seats across 20 districts of the state

3 DRUG SMUGGLERS HELD IN PUNJAB'S PATHANKOT

	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	41	25	Mumbai	33	28
Bhopal	40	25	Panaji	33	27
Jaipur	39	24	Patna	37	21
Amritsar	38	16	Lucknow	40	22
Chennai	33	27	Port Blair	31	27
Kolkata	39	27	Imphal	33	19
Srinagar	23	9	Chandigarh	36	17

ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2021 DECIDE

Mamata Banerjee came to power by talking about 'ma mati manush', but didi did not think of 'ma', did not think of 'mati', did not think of 'manush' – J P Nadda, BJP president

People in Bhabanipur have become disillusioned with Mamata Banerjee in the last couple of years. She fled to Nandigram sensing imminent defeat here – Rudranil Ghosh, BJP candidate

The EC allowed rallies with 500 people, but did nothing to monitor the restriction. The EC should have clubbed the remaining phases (of the election) – Abhishek Banerjee, TMC leader

It's Nadda vs Mamata on the eve of phase 7 polls

TMC leader again attacks Centre over Covid, BJP prez gives it back

12,068

polling stations spread across West Bengal's 34 Assembly constituencies will be open to voters from 7 am on Monday

284

candidates are in the fray. A total of 86 lakh people are eligible to vote. The eighth phase will be held on Apr 29

PRANAB MONDAL @ Kolkata

ON the eve of the seventh phase of the Assembly elections in West Bengal on Sunday, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and BJP national president J P Nadda were locked in a war of words over the surging Covid-19 cases in the country.

Attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his latest Maan Ki Baath speech, Mamata said, "When the entire country is facing an oxygen shortage, you are engaging in Mann Ki Baat. Mann Ki Baat noy, Covid Ki baat korun (talk about Covid)".

The Trinamool Congress supremo once again accused the Centre of diverting the oxygen supply meant for West Bengal to the BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh. She also reiterated her claim that the Centre is preferring some states over others when it comes to vaccine distribution. "The Centre is diverting oxygen cylinders from the supplier who caters to West Bengal. Gujarat received the highest volume of vaccines while other states received about one-fourth of it," she said in her virtual address to the voters in Murshidabad, which goes to the polls on Monday. She also continued her attack on the Election Commission. "We requested the Commission to club the last three phases into one. But they did not listen to us. They kept the poll schedule unchanged endangering lives," she said.

In his virtual rally on Sunday, Nadda hit back at her over her persistent attack on the Centre. He asked why she chose to skip the Prime Minister's recent virtual meet with CMs during which ways to combat the pandemic were discussed.

"You hold the health portfolio in Bengal. You are claiming that vaccines are not available in the state. But you have forgotten that you have deprived the people of the state of many essential facilities over the last 10 years. If vaccines are not available, how come you are sending updates on the number of doses administered to people each day to the Union Health Ministry?" Nadda asked.

He further added that members of a Central team sent to West Bengal last year to review the coronavirus situation there were prevented from doing their work freely the TMC-led government.

Nadda wondered whether it was ego that prevented Mamata from attending the virtual meet with the PM. "Why didn't you attend the meeting convened by the Prime Minister on the Covid situation? Is it because of your huge ego? Her (Mamata's) nonstop attacks against the Centre is nothing other than a reflection of her own looming defeat," Nadda said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses a virtual meeting in Rabindra Sadan at Baharampur in West Bengal on Sunday | BIPASH LODH

Why didn't you attend the meeting convened by the Prime Minister on the Covid situation? Is it because of your huge ego? Her (Mamata's) nonstop attacks against the Centre is nothing other than a reflection of her own looming defeat

J P Nadda, BJP National President

796 companies of Central forces for seventh phase

The Election Commission has decided to deploy at least 796 companies of central forces in the seventh phase to ensure free and fair voting. Security measures have been heightened in view of the violence in the previous phases, particularly the death of five people in Cooch Behar in the fourth round of polling on April 10, an Election Commission official said. The poll body will also put in place measures to ensure strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols during the voting process, officials said. Voting will be held at 12,068 polling stations, spread over nine assembly constituencies each in Murshidabad and Paschim Bardhaman districts, six each in Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda and four in Kolkata. Campaigning for the seventh phase has been a low-key affair, following curbs imposed by the EC in the wake of the second wave of Covid-19 cases. The EC has banned roadshows and vehicle rallies

BATTLE FOR BENGAL

Poll officials carry electronic voting machine to a polling booth in West Bengal's Rashbehari Assembly constituency on Sunday | BIPASH LODH

Trinamool candidate dies of Covid

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolkata

TRINAMOOL Congress candidate from West Bengal's Khardah Assembly constituency succumbed to Covid-19 on Sunday. He was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Kolkata after testing positive for the coronavirus two days earlier.

Kajal Sinha, 59, was found to have contracted the viral disease two days ago, following which he was admitted to Beliaghata ID hospital, an official said.

TMC supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed shock over his death.

"Very, very sad. Shocked. Kajal Sinha, our candidate from Khardaha, succumbed to Covid. He dedicated his life to serving people & just fought a tireless campaign. He was a long-serving committed member of @AITCofficial," she tweeted.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Babul Supriyo on Sunday said he and his wife have tested positive for Covid. "Both me & my wife have tested positive. Me for the 2nd time!! V Sad that I won't be able to vote in Asansol. I needed to be there on the road too for the 26th polls where 'desperate' @AITCofficial goons hv already unleashed their terror machinery," Supriyo tweeted.

Kajal Sinha

SC judge Justice Shantanagoudar dies of cardiac arrest in Gurugram

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru/ New Delhi

SUPREME Court judge Justice Mohan M Shantanagoudar (62) passed away at a private hospital at Gurugram in New Delhi late Saturday evening after a prolonged illness. He was recently infected with viral pneumonia and died of a cardiac arrest.

His last rites were performed at Chamarajpet in Bengaluru on Sunday afternoon.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Chief Justice of India NV Ramana, Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa and others condoled the death of Justice Shantanagoudar.

"The demise of Justice Mohan M. Shantanagoudar has caused deep sorrow. His sound contribution and caliber enabled him to serve as a judge at Karnataka & Kerala High Courts, & finally, the Supreme Court. He leaves behind a void in legal fraternity. My condolences to his family," President Kovind tweeted.

CJI Ramana stated in a press release that his death had come as a shock. "I was hoping for his speedy and complete recovery and his return to the Bench at the earliest. The news of his passing has come as a rude shock. I have lost a valued colleague. In the last four years of my association with him in the Supreme Court, I have benefitted immensely from his amazing legal acumen," he stated.

Justice Mohan M Shantanagoudar

Justice Shantanagouda was the ninth seniormost judge of the top court. He had settled several substantial questions of law, and one of his notable judgments with his dissent in the Indore Development Authority case, which dealt with Section 24 of the new land acquisition law.

Expressing deep condolences, Karnataka Advocate-General Prabhuling K Navadagi said the untimely demise of Justice Shantanagoudar is a great loss not only to the Indian judiciary but the entire legal fraternity. He had delivered important and path-breaking judgments, and was a champion of the lawyers' community, Navadagi said.

Justice Shantanagoudar is survived by his wife, daughter and son Shivaprasad Shantanagoudar, a practising advocate at the Karnataka High Court.

Born on May 5, 1958 in Haveri district, Shantanagoudar enrolled as an advocate at Dharwad and then shifted to Bengaluru. Later he joined the chambers of Shivaraj Patil, who went on to become Supreme Court judge. He was appointed Additional Judge of the Karnataka High Court in 2003 and as Permanent Judge in 2004. He was appointed Chief Justice of Kerala High Court on August 1, 2016, and was elevated as Supreme Court Judge on February 17, 2017.

The demise of Justice Mohan M. Shantanagoudar has caused deep sorrow. His sound contribution and caliber enabled him to serve as a judge at Karnataka & Kerala High Courts, & finally, the Supreme Court.
Ram Nath Kovind, President of India

Avalanche toll 11 as one more body is retrieved

VINEET UPADHYAY @ Dehradun

ONE more body was recovered on Sunday from Niti Valley in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district where an avalanche struck on Friday night. With that, the toll has risen to 11.

"The reach operation is on and a total of 11 bodies have been recovered till now. A postmortem is being conducted of the deceased and their families will be compensated as per the law," said Swati Bhadauria, district magistrate of Chamoli. Personnel of the Indian Army, National Disaster Response Force, and State Disaster Response Force were still conducting rescue works as of Sunday night to locate those who are missing.

Speculations are still on as to what caused the avalanche. Experts said chances are less that a glacier break caused it.

Kalachand Sain, director of Wadia Institute Of Himalayan Glaciology, Dehradun said, "Anything can be said conclusively only after thorough investigation. It seems unlikely that the avalanche occurred due to the breaking of a glacier."

"It is important to note that landslide or avalanche proneness of a place is relatively easy to decipher as these often take place repeatedly at an identified vulnerable location and indications of previous avalanche or landslide activity can easily be observed in the form of chutes, buried exotic boulders and scars," a scientist from the Uttarakhand Disaster Management Department told TNIE on the condition of anonymity. "It is, therefore, necessary that even temporary establishments housing humans be set up after seeking geologist's advice. This would help avert loss of lives," the official said.

500 join search for abducted worker

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Raipur

WITH the help of local villagers, security forces intensified the search for the last of the three ONGC employees who were abducted by ULFA militants from an oil rig in Assam.

Some 500 people, including residents of a number of villages, conducted a search operation on Sunday in Mon, Nagaland, but were yet to locate Ritul Saikia, a junior technician of ONGC.

Two employees were rescued following an encounter in Mon on Saturday.

"We have narrowed down the search to a few areas and involved village guards and residents of a number of villages in the search operation in consultations with village authorities," officials in Nagaland said.

"Hopefully, we will get a breakthrough soon. The two employees rescued were handed over to the Assam Police on Saturday night," the officials added.

ULFA, however, denied that the third employee is in their custody, and said all three were handed over to villagers due to concerns about their safety as a gunfire erupted between the militants and the security forces on Saturday in Mon.

"Since the security forces have not yet said anything about the fate of the third person, we suspect that he was either killed or kept hidden by them," the ULFA said.

Three persons were abducted from the site of an oil rig in the Lakwa field of Assam's Sivasagar district in the wee hours of Wednesday. The militants had enquired about the health condition of eight employees at the site prior to kidnapping the "fittest" since they had to be taken to the jungles of Myanmar on foot.

EXPRESS READ

Sacrilege case: Sidhu for new SIT probe

Guwahati: Stepping up the pressure campaign against the Punjab government over the sacrilege case, former Punjab Local Bodies Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu on Sunday demanded a "fair investigation" by a new SIT. Days after Punjab and Haryana HC quashed an SIT probe report, Sidhu tweeted, "The judgment does not mean that there is no evidence against Badals, it just means the investigation has not provided any. It is a temporary reprieve for Badals until a fair investigation brings them to docks."

GUWAHATI DIARY

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR
Our correspondent in Guwahati
prasantamazumdar@newindianexpress.com

Writer charged with sedition gets bail

The Gauhati High Court has granted bail to writer Sikha Sarma who was arrested recently over alleged remarks against martyrs on social media. The court said that on scrutiny of the case diary, it appears that the accused had prima facie expressed her personal views on the use of the term "swahid/martyr" through the social network. The 48-year-old writer from Guwahati was arrested on various charges, including sedition, for her Facebook post, that "salaried professionals who die in the line of duty cannot be termed, martyrs. Going by that logic, electricity department workers who die of electrocution should also be labeled martyrs..."

Homeo doctors working at allopathy hospitals arrested

Two homeopathy doctors, who allegedly practiced allopathy in private hospitals by submitting forged MBBS degree certificates, were arrested by the police. The registrar of the city-based Srimanta Sankardeva University of Health Sciences (SSUHS) had lodged a complaint with the local police saying Monoranjan Roy and Hrishikesh Bhuyan are practicing in private hospitals with a fake degree certificate that has the name of the SSUHS. Based on his complaint, the police registered a case under Indian Penal Code Sections 420 (cheating and dishonesty), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), and 471 (whoever fraudulently or dishonestly uses as genuine any document or electronic record which he knows or has reason to believe to be a forged)

IIT team finds way to remove plastic from seawater

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati (IIT-G) have developed a microfiltration process that can remove micro-plastics from seawater. It may help reduce the amount of plastic residue in the salt extracted from seawater. The research results were recently published in the journal *Environmental Technology & Innovation*. "Micro-plastics – plastic pieces smaller than one-fifth of an inch – are now found in almost all oceans. As a result, sea salt has been found to have considerable amounts of micro-plastic.

Police nab Covid-19 patient who fled hosp

A Covid-19 patient, who is also a murdered accused, had fled a hospital in Guwahati. But, his run was cut short by Meghalaya police who nabbed him and a co-accused. The duo was made to wear a PPE kit and was taken to Guwahati. The Assam Police praised their counterparts in Meghalaya. "Corona giveth & Corona taketh away! When you are a #Covid19+ murder accused and try escaping from MMC Hospital, Guwahati, but end up in custody, socially distanced & PPE'd, along with a co-accused. Stellar work @KamrupPolice for apprehending them," the Assam Police tweeted.

SRI LANKA BANS ALL STATE, PRIVATE FUNCTIONS

Colombo: Sri Lanka on Sunday banned all state and private public functions in the next two weeks, owing to Covid. The reopening of universities has been postponed. Health authorities say a new Covid variant is spreading, which is infecting younger patients. PTI

5,611 MORE COVID CASES IN PAK, DEATH TOLL CROSSES 17,000

Islamabad: Pakistan recorded 5,611 new Covid-19 cases on Sunday, pushing the number of infections to 7,95,627. The Ministry of National Health Services said 118 more people have succumbed to the virus in the last 24 hours, taking the overall death toll to 17,117.

82 killed in Baghdad hospital fire

110 hurt in blaze set off by oxygen cylinder explosion; health minister, other key officials fired

BAGHDAD

THE death toll from a massive fire in a Baghdad hospital for coronavirus patients rose to 82 Sunday, as anxious relatives searched for those missing and the government suspended key health officials for alleged negligence.

The blaze, described by one witness as 'volcanoes of fire,' swept through the intensive care unit of the Ibn al-Khatib hospital which tends exclusively to coronavirus patients with severe symptoms. Officials said the blaze, which also injured 110 people, was set off by an exploding oxygen cylinder.

Maher Ahmed, a nurse, was called at 9:45pm on Saturday, to come to the scene and help evacuate patients. "I could not have imagined it would be a massive blaze like that," he said.

"The flames overwhelmed the second floor isolation hall of the hospital within three to four minutes of the oxygen cylinder exploding," he said. "Volcanoes of fire." "Everyone, from regular citizens to (officials) at the top of the pyramid, has some responsibility for this incident," he said. Widespread negligence on the part of health officials is to blame for the deadly fire, Iraq's prime minister, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, said on Sunday.

Mourners pray near the coffins of Covid patients who were killed in the fire, during the funeral at the Imam Ali shrine in Najaf, Iraq, on Sunday | AP/PTI

Following a special cabinet meeting, the government suspended key officials, including health minister Hasan al-Tamimi and governor of Baghdad province. Other officials, including the director of the Ibn al-Khatib Hospital, were withdrawn from their posts.

It took firefighters and civil defense teams until the early hours of Sunday to put out the flames. Among the dead were at least 28 patients on ventilators battling severe symptoms of Covid, tweeted Ali al-Bayati, a spokesman of the country's independent Human Rights Commission, a semi-official body.

Paramedics carried the bodies, many burned beyond recognition, to al-Zafaraniya Hospital, where Ahmed said forensics teams will attempt to identify them by matching DNA samples to relatives.

By midday Sunday, relatives were still searching anxiously for unaccounted loved ones.

The cabinet meeting called after the incident also fired the director-general of the Baghdad health department in the al-Rusafa area, where the hospital is located, as well as the hospital director and its director of engineering and maintenance, according to a statement from the Health Ministry and the prime minister's office.

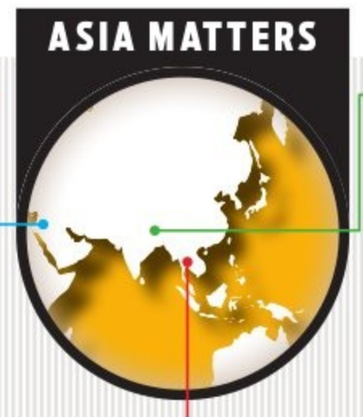
"Negligence in such matters is not a mistake, but a crime for which all negligent parties must bear responsibility," al-Kadhimi said after a security meeting Sunday.

UN envoy to Iraq Jeannine Hennis-Plasschaert expressed 'shock and pain' over the incident and called for stronger protection measures in hospitals. At the Vatican, Pope Francis, who concluded a historic trip to Iraq last month, remembered those who perished in the blaze. *AP*

Negligence in such matters is not a mistake, but a crime for which all negligent parties must bear responsibility

Mustafa al-Kadhimi, Iranian Prime Minister

ASIA MATTERS



SYRIA

Schools begin final exams weeks early

Hundreds of thousands of students in government-controlled parts of Syria began taking final exams Sunday after a three-week schools closure to limit the spread of the coronavirus, state news agency SANA reported. Syria has witnessed a sharp increase in cases in recent weeks leading to the closure of schools and universities as well as some state institutions. Some 1.5 million students from fifth grade through high school went to 10,550 schools to take exams amid measures to prevent the spread of the virus, including wearing masks and sanitizing classrooms, SANA said. The exams are being given nearly a month earlier than scheduled as schools will close early this year because of the pandemic. SANA quoted a Education Ministry official as saying that in the past two days all schools were sanitized ahead of the exams in government-held areas. AP

THAILAND

Bangkok imposes restrictions

Thailand on Sunday reported 2,438 new cases and 11 deaths, as Bangkok braced for the closure of entertainment and sport venues in view of the pandemic. The Thai capital saw a rapid rise in cases since early April, and its governor, Aswin Kwanmuang, announced the two-week closures starting Monday. They include gyms, zoos, public parks, meeting centres, nurseries and boxing stadiums. Those not wearing masks in public will be penalised. Shortage of hospital beds, stemming from a regulation that everyone testing positive for Covid must be treated in a hospital, are causing frustration. Media reported two people died in their homes after being turned down by hospitals. AP

NEPAL

Record number of permits for Everest expeditions

Nepal has issued a record 394 permits till Friday this year for expeditions to Mt Everest, the world's tallest peak, despite the surging Covid-19 pandemic, breaking the earlier record of 381 permits issued in 2019. "We have issued permission to those expedition teams that applied for it with due procedures," Meera Acharya, director at Department of Tourism, said. The Ministry of Tourism and civil aviation issued a record 394 permits for the expeditions to Everest, she said. The Nepali government's move has come amid intense scrutiny over a reported traffic jam on Mt. Everest, whose revised height is 8848.86m. Nepal relies heavily on income generated from Everest expeditions. "I have no information about the traffic jam on the Everest," Acharya said in response to a question. Nepal has reported 2,97,087 Covid-19 cases so far with 3,136 deaths. PTI

8 cops hurt in London anti-lockdown stir

LONDON

EIGHT police officers were injured and five people arrested during an anti-lockdown protest that involved clashes in small pockets in central London, the Metropolitan Police said. Demonstrators marched along Oxford Street and other central areas of the UK capital city before gathering at Hyde Park on Saturday, where some hurled bottles and other items as the police when they tried to disperse the large crowds.

Protesters, holding placards calling for an end to lockdown rules, could be heard sloganeering against curbs such as face masks. "Eight officers were injured as they worked to disperse crowds in Hyde Park," the Met Police said.

"Two officers were taken to hospital. Thankfully, they are not believed to be seriously injured. Five people were arrested for offences including assault on police and are now in custody," it said.

Home Secretary Priti Patel took to Twitter to condemn the "criminal minority" behind the unrest and pledged tougher sentences for such attacks on police officers.

"Our brave police are the best of us and should not be the target of senseless violence by a criminal minority for just doing their job," said Patel.

"I am getting tough on these thugs and will be doubling the sentence for assault of an emergency worker. I wish the officers a speedy recovery," she said. Under the current eased coronavirus lockdown rules, outdoors gatherings are limited to 30 and demonstrations are required to be conducted in a Covid-secure way.

In a social media appeal ahead of the protest, the Met Police had asked anyone coming into London for a protest to make sure their gathering is lawful, with a risk assessment carried out by the organiser.

Demonstrators take part in an anti-lockdown, anti-Covid-19 vaccination passports, 'Unite for Freedom' protest in central London on Saturday | AFP

Images and videos from the scene showed officers left bleeding and some being tackled by angry crowds.

"These officers are just doing a job, they're somebody's son, daughter they're mums and dads," John Apter, the National Chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said on Twitter.

"To be targeted in the way they are says a lot about the society we've become. I will continue to do my best to support them but I need Government to do more, much more,' he said.

London mayoral candidates Piers Corbyn, the brother of former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, and actor Laurence Fox 'running on an anti-lockdown platform against Mayor Sadiq Khan in the May election' were also part of the march.

The UK is currently mid-way through a lockdown easing roadmap set by the government, with the next phase of further easing of restrictions scheduled for May 17. *PTI*

EXPRESS READ

Protesters call for trial of Jewish woman's killer

Paris: Crowds gathered on Sunday in Paris and other French cities to denounce a ruling by France's highest court that Kobili Traor, the killer of Jewish woman Sarah Halimi, 65, was not criminally responsible and could not go on trial. Thousands of people filled the Trocadero Plaza answering a call by Jewish associations, bodies fighting anti-Semitism and others who say justice has not been done. Halimi died in 2017 after she was pushed out of the window of her apartment by her neighbour, Kobili Traor. AP

Gunfire in Somali capital amid prez's standoff

MOGADISHU

GUNFIRE erupted in Somalia's capital on Sunday between soldiers loyal to the government and others angry at the country's leader as tensions spiked over President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed's extended stay in power.

There were no reports of casualties, but the gunfire heard across much of the city highlighted earlier warnings that the election standoff could increase instability in the Horn of Africa nation.

The estimated hundreds of mutinous soldiers, still in uniform, took up key positions in northern Mogadishu as some residents hid. There was no immediate comment from the government.

Abdullahi faces growing opposition after the lower house of parliament approved a two-year extension of his mandate and that of the federal government and he approved it, to the fury of Senate leaders and criticism of the international community. Somalia's election, meant for early February, has been delayed amid disputes between the federal government and the states of Puntland and Jubbaland along with the opposition. *AP*

Armenian PM steps down to allow snap poll

YEREVAN

ARMENIA'S prime minister has resigned, a step necessary to hold snap parliamentary elections in June. PM Nikol Pashinyan announced the June 20 elections last month to try to resolve political tensions that arose after last year's defeat in a war with Azerbaijan.

Under a cease-fire signed by Pashinyan, Armenia ceded territory in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan that had been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces since the end of a separatist war in 1994. The agreement sparked large protests. "If people decide that I should leave the PM's post, I will obey," Pashinyan said on Sunday in announcing his resignation. *AP*

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my client is the Agreement holder of Agricultural land bearing Sy.No.8/2, 8/3, 8/15, 8/16, 8/17 and 8/18 in total measuring to the extent of 0.27 Guntas Situated at Muthugadahalli Village, Jala-1 Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore District.

Persons Objecting for having any rights in the Schedule Property, may lodge their objections or claims with the undersigned alongwith Supporting Documentary evidence with in **7 (Seven) days** from the date of this publication and objections or claims received thereafter will not be binding on my client and my client will proceed to purchase the Schedule Property, as if there are no claims / Objections.

-: SCHEDULE :-

All that piece and parcel of Agricultural Land bearing Sy.No.8/2, 8/3, 8/15 8/16, 8/17 and 8/18 in total measuring 0.27 Guntas Situated at Muthugadahalli Village, Jala-1 Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore District Bounded by.

East :- Sy. No.60 and Road, West :- Hanumantharayappa Land, North:- Road and Sy.No.8, South:- Gopalaiah Land.

Sd/- B.M. Jagadish, B.A.L., L.L.B. Advocate, # Advocates and Property Legal Consultants, Siganduru Chowdeshwari Enterprises, Suggappa Layout, Railway Station Road, Mini Vidhana Soudha, Yelahanka, Bangalore-560064. Mobile No. 8861695199 / 9611222255.

Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited

(Wholly Owned Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

(CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT) (Through e-Procurement Portal)

BESCOM, invites tender for the "Supply of 11kV Class, SF6, Outdoor type compact DAS RMUs (3 Way & 5 Way) vide Enquiry No.**BESCOM/GM-DAS/21-22/Supply of 3 Way & 5 Way RMU/04 dated: 26-04-2021** and Repairing of Siemens make 5 Way DAS RMUs installed under DAS Project vide Enquiry No.**BESCOM/GM-(DAS)/21-22/Siemens 5 Way RMU repair/05 dated: 26-04-2021.** Availability of Bid documents: **28-04-2021, 16:00 Hrs.** onwards. The bid documents can be obtained through e-procurement portal from the website **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in.** e-procurement help desk: **+91 80 46010000, +91 80 22631200 or e-mail : support@ihelpdesk.com.**

Sd/- General Manager (DAS), BESCOM, Bengaluru.

For Electricity related complaints call: 1912

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PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Publics are hereby informed that our Client intending to purchase the below mentioned schedule property from its owner i.e **Sri. T. S. Shiva Kumar**, S/o. T. N. Shankar Kumar, aged about 37 years, resident of No.85/8, 10th 'C' Main road, 1st Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru-560 011

If anybody is having any objection, claim, interest, dispute in respect of the below mentioned schedule property, he/she/they may contact the undersigned with the documentary proofs substantiating his/her/their objections/claims/details of dispute/s within **Fourteen[14] days** from the date of this publication, failing which, our Client will proceed to complete the sale transaction with the above owner as if there are no third party claims/objections/disputes in respect of the schedule property and thereafter no claims/objections/disputes will be entertained.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of the residential vacant site bearing **No.1849, Banashankari 6th Stage, IV "H" Block [BSK VI Stage, IV 'H' BLK],** Bengaluru, admeasuring East to West 6.00 meters [six meters] and North to South 9.00 meters [Nine meters] measuring in all 54.00 square meters [Fifty Four square meters] including all right, privileges and appurtenances, thereto and bounder on the:- **East by :** Site No.1850, **West by :** Site No.1848, **North by :** Road, **South by :** Site No.1888.

M. S. Ramesha & Manjunatha. R, Advocates, No.1101/01, O.T.C Road, Near Pai Vihar Hotel, Bengaluru-560 002 Mob. No. 9845258269, 9900979927, Email Id: Rameshtsc.ms@Gmail.com

Tata Capital Financial Services Limited

Registered Office Address: 11th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Ganpatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013. **Branch Address:** D.No.62, Richmond Road, IInd Floor, Prestige Corniche, Above Sapphire Toys, Near Life Style, Bangalore-560025.

PUBLIC NOTICE - INTIMATION CUM SALE NOTICE

Intimation to Remove Movable Assets from Secured Property

Notice is hereby given to the public that **Tata Capital Financial Services Ltd. (TCFSL),** is a Securitization and Asset Reconstruction Company registered with the Reserve Bank of India under the provisions of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act).

Authorized Officer of TCFSL, in exercise of powers conferred under SARFAESI Act, has already sold the below mentioned Immovable Property/Secured Asset in public auction for recovery of outstanding dues of respective borrowers against loan accounts. **TCFSL** has handed over the possession of secured property to auction-purchaser.

At the time of taking possession of said properties, some movable items ("household goods" in particular) were found by Authorised Officer in the secured premises. We have shifted these movable items/articles to our nearest stock yard premises and safe guarding these articles since from more than 2 years & above. Even after many notices sent to borrowers/co-borrowers by RPAD/Email/WhatsApp, at all the available addresses intimating them to collect/remove moveable items lying in secured properties at the earliest; no representation is made from their sides till date for same. Therefore, through this notice, we hereby givefinal intimation toborrower/co-borrower to take possession of moveable items lying inside the mortgaged properties in presence and with consent of **Authorised Officer of TCFSL** by fumishing required documentary proof on or before May 14, 2021. Failing this, **TCFSL** shall be compelled to dispose of the said movable items through auction on **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS and AS IS WHAT IS BASIS"** as per below schedule andno claim from any party pertaining to any loss or damages will be accepted after the sale is executed.

Account No.	Name of Borrower/Co-borrower and Address of Secured Property	Movable Assets Details	Auction Date, Time & Place	Reserve Price & EMD Amount
5389240	**Mr. B.Sridhar (Borrower) & Mrs. Usha.P (Co-Borrower),** D.No.4321, 1st Cross, 14th Main Road, Subramanya Nagar, Sriramapuram, Bangalore, Karnataka-560021. **And also Address at;** R/o.D.No.1191, 6th Main, 'A' Block, Balaji Nagar, Bangalore-560010. **And also Address at:** Lalitha Graphics, # 2013, 7th Main Road, 2nd Block, Rajaji Nagar, Bangalore-560010. **Schedule of Property:-** All that piece of the property with RCC building having covered are measuring 1350 Sq.Ft, bearing property Site No.4321 situated in Rajaji Nagar-II Stage extension are presently with in limit of BBMP **and bounded by (morefully describedin sale deed dated December 3,1990 and document No.4063) bounded by: North by:** Site No.4332, **East:** 4320 **West:** Site No.4322, **South:** Road.	Household goods list of which is available with TCFSL Bangalore Branch office at the address given below	**15-May-2021 02:00 PM** TCFSL Bangalore Branch office at the address given below	**Rs. 2,300/-**

Parties interested in buying the said movable goods may submit their offer in a sealed cover along with Demand Draft of EMD amountupto 2 hours prior to auction time. Demand Draft is to be made **"Payable at Bangalore"** in the name shown in **"Tata Capital Financial Services Ltd., Bangalore Branch"** column above. Sealed covers would be opened at **TCFSL Bangalore Branch Office** on auction dale & time mentioned above for inter se bidding.

Place: Bangalore, Date: 26/04/2021 **Sd/- Authorized Officer,Tata Capital Financial Services Ltd.**

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.

Corporate Office : 201, Raheja Point-1, Near SVC Bank, Nehru Road,Vakola, Santacruz (East), **Mumbai - 400055.**

Malleshwaram Branch : Office No. 284, 2nd Floor, 17th & 18th Cross, Sampige Road, Malleshwaram, Bangalore-560 003.(Karnataka). A.O : Sathish Kumar S, Contact No.: 9743417599.

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION CUM SALE

Pursuant to taking possession of the secured asset mentioned hereunder by the Authorized Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited under the **Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002** for the recovery of amount due from borrower/s, offers are invited by the undersigned in sealed covers for purchase of immovable property, as described hereunder, which is in the physical possession, on **'As Is Where Is Basis', 'As Is What Is Basis' and 'Whatever Is There Is Basis',** Particulars of which are given below:-

Sl No.	Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of the Immovable property	Reserve Price (RP)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (10% of RP)
1.	**Appl No : V0133783 (Malleswaram Branch) Keshavalu Reddy K A** (Borrower) **Nirmala Keshav** (Co Borrower)	11-06-2018 ₹ 24,19,254.00	**SCHEDULE 'A' PROPERTY** - "(Description of entire property on which the apartment building being constructed.) - All that piece and parcel of immovable property comprising 3 items of converted land (converted from agricultural use to non agricultural residential purpose vide order No. ALN-[ASH]-SR-210/2010-11 DATED 29-03-2011, passed by Spl. Deputy Commissioner (Rev), Bangalore Dist.) forming contiguous plot, situated in Kudlu village, Sarjapur Hobli, Anekal Taluk, totally measuring 2 Acres 33 Guntas, as described in the item no. 1, 2 and 3 hereunder: **Item No.1 -** All that piece and parcel of immovable property comprising in converted land bearing Sy No. 87/1 of Kudlu Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, measuring 01 Acre 16 Guntas and the said property is bounded there on:- East By : Land in Sy No. 88/1, West by : Road, North by : Road and South by : Land in Sy No.87/2 & 88/2. **Item No.2 -** All that piece and parcel of immovable property comprising in converted land bearing Sy No. 87/2 of Kudlu Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, measuring 39 Guntas and the said property is bounded there on:- East By : Land in Sy No. 88/2, West by :Road, North by : Land in Sy No. 87/1 and South by: Land belonged to Doddammane Abbaiah. **Item No.3 -** All that piece and parcel of immovable property comprising in converted land bearing Sy No. 88/2 of Kudlu Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Rural District, measuring 18 Guntas and the said property is bounded there on:- East by : Portion of land in the same survey number allotted to Nagaraj Reddy, West by : Land in Sy No. 87/2, North by: Land in Sy No. 87/1 and South by: Doddammane Abbaiah's property in Sy No.86/1. **SCHEDULE A (a) PROPERTY -** "(Description of immovable property on which the club house and commercial space of the apartment complex is situated.) - All that piece and parcel of immovable property being the portion of land measuring 1,23,057 Sq.Ft. out of the entire project land comprising in item no.1 to 3 of Schedule – A property herein above, viz., (i) Sy No. 87/1 measuring 1 Acre 16 Guntas, (ii) Sy No. 87/2 measuring 39 Guntas, (iii) Sy No. 88/2 measuring 18 Guntas situated in Kudlu Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk (totally measuring 2 Acres 33 Guntas or 1,23,057 Sq.Ft.) having BBMP Khata No. No.54/Sy.No.87/1, 87/2 88/2, being the land appurtenant to the club house and commercial building which is as marked in the building plan approved by the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagar Palike vide No.J.D.P.T./S/LP/59/2010-11, along with all rights of way, water, light, electricity, drainage, easementary rights and other rights and appurtenances attached hereto." **SCHEDULE B PROPERTY -** 565 Sq. Ft. undivided right, title and interest in the immovable property mentioned in schedule "A" above. **SCHEDULE 'C' PROPERTY -** All that piece and parcel of the residential property bearing No. G-01, on Ground Floor, Type 2A, in E Block, measuring 1820 Sq Ft Super Built up area and together with 430 Sq Ft of exclusive open terrace area, containing three bed Rooms along with One Car Parking Space in the multistoried residential apartment building known as "ND PASSION ELITE" constructed in the immovable property bearing being the portion of land measuring 1,23,057 Sq Ft out of the entire project land comprising in Item No. 1 to 3 of in the schedule 'A' property herein above situated in Kudlu Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk (Totally measuring 2 Acres 33 Guntas or 1,23,057 Sq Ft) having B Khatha No. 54, Sy No.87/1, 87/2, 88/2, being the land apartment to the club house and commercial building which as marked in the building plan approved by the Bhuhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike Vide No. J.D.T.P/S/LP/59/2010-11 along with 565 Sq Ft of undivided Share of land and bounded for Flat :- **East Side By** : Open to Sky, **West Side By** : Flat No. G - 02, **North Side By** : Flat No. G - 04, **South Side By :** Open to Sky.	₹ 61,88,000.00 (Rupees Sixty One Lakhs Eighty Eight Thousand Only)	₹ 6,18,800.00 (Rupees Six Lakh Eighteen Thousand Eight Hundred Only)

1. **Last Date of Submission of Sealed Bid/ Offer** in the prescribed tender forms along with EMD and KYC is **26-05-2021**. within 5:00 PM at the Branch Office address mentioned herein above. Tenders that are not filled up or tenders received beyond last date will be considered as invalid tender and shall accordingly be rejected. No interest shall be paid on the EMD.
2. **Date of Opening of the Bid/Offer (Auction Date)** for Property is **27-05-2021.** at the above mentioned branch office address at 3:00 PM. The tender will be opened in the presence of the Authorised Officer.
3. The notice is hereby given to the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s, to remain present personally at the time of sale and they can bring the intending buyers/purchasers for purchasing the immovable property as described herein above, as per the particulars of Terms and Conditions of Sale.
4. **30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT, 2002 is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the above described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physcial possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" and to pay the amount due to Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd., in full before the date of sale, auction is liable to be stopped.**
5. The immovable property will be sold to the highest tenderer. However, the Authorised Officer reserves the absolute discretion to allow inter se bidding, if deemed necessary. The Property as mentioned will not be sold below Reserve Price.
6. **AHFL is not responsible for any liabilities whatsoever pending upon the property as mentioned above. The Property shall be auctioned on 'As Is Where Is Basis', 'As Is What Is Basis' and 'Whatever Is There Is Basis'.**
7. The Demand Draft Should be made in favor of '**Aadhar Housing Finance Limited' Only.**
8. The detail terms and conditions of the auction sale are incorporated in the prescribed tender form. Tender forms are available at the above mentioned Branch office. Authorised officer reserve the rights to extend the date of tender or change the terms & conditions of bidding. For further details & other terms & conditions of bidding please visit our branch and website : **www.aadharhousing.com**

For further details, contact the Authorised Officer, at the above mentioned Office address.

Place : Malleswaram **Authorised Officer**
Date : 26.4.2021 **Aadhar Housing Finance Limited**

QuoteExpress **IF YOU'RE GOING THROUGH HELL, KEEP GOING** › WINSTON CHURCHILL

MONEY-WISE

TEACHING THE VALUE OF MONEY EARLY ON IS A MUST

Every financial article, planner or adviser will tell you that you should take term life insurance to protect your family. This amount of money will protect your family from financial troubles if you were to die before completing your financial responsibilities.

There is no doubt that term life insurance is a must. Far more important is to teach your children the value of money, and the do's and don'ts' of money. Nobody else in the world is going to teach them as honestly and sincerely as you can, will or should. Financial literacy can mean different things for different people, but knowing how much you earn, and your relationship with money is very important.

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM

writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹40 a day'

Children should know how money goes into the bank account - they know it comes out of the ATM.

- Communicate, and do projects together: Let your children do the ticket booking and hotel short-listing when you go on a vacation. Let them short-list the things to buy - from household goods to even groceries. Teach them the usage of the credit card and the debit card. They feel empowered in the beginning, and later on you can delegate easily. From the age of 12, my daughter has been booking tickets for our travel.
- Get your children to pay the monthly utility bills - this is a very useful task to learn.
- Involve your children in your investment decision - knowing why a mutual fund has been chosen, for which goal etc. This will force you to be focused on your goal-based investing, and you will no longer do unfocused investing - both parent and child benefit!
- Teaching a child about why you do charity - and to whom you do it is also very useful. Young children should start learning about charity by starting to give away their old toys, dresses, etc. Once they start earning, encourage them to choose some good charitable organisation to engage with.
- Children will see the benefit of your organised living - making a budget, recording the expenses, planning for the bigger goals, etc. They will carry some of these learnings into their education too. The advantages of organising their education — starting to study from day 1, planning for studying etc. is just taking learning from one field to another.
- Teach them to read labels - NOBODY else will. I mean food labels, and the labels on financial products. They should understand that when a product says "no sugar" it could be loaded with carbohydrates, which will eventually get converted to sugar. It is not so intuitive. You may have to learn to be able to teach — good for the family.
- Teach them the advantages of patience. Put money into their savings account and let them withdraw with a debit card. Tell them that you will double the balance left at the end of the month - and move it into a mutual fund. This is a huge incentive to save instead of spending. It also teaches them to prioritize and WAIT for the end of the month to spend it. Imagine if they had ₹1,000, you will contribute another ₹1,000 and shift it to a mutual fund. They should be allowed to withdraw the mutual fund only when it is eligible to withdraw without load. This forces them to keep it there for another one year!

There are many hacks that you can use to teach your children MONEY! These are just some of the examples that I have tried. I am sure all of you would have your own hacks — just add these to your armoury!

Data privacy is a concern. While fintech firms enhance your ability to transact online, you must use apps only from regulated entities

OPEN BANKING OPPORTUNITIES & RISKS

RAJAS KELKAR

Your personal information is creating a revolution. It is perhaps making a whole new world. Open banking is where banks and other financial institutions involve third parties to use transactional, operational or personal data to create innovative solutions. That is done by plugging in the application programming interfaces (APIs) of third-party providers.

CRED, a fintech company, allows you to pay their credit card bills by offering other freebies or short-term credit. It caters to customers with good credit scores. Then, there are disruptive businesses like Faircent, a peer-to-peer lending platform. Any success for such a platform could threaten retail banking as it links people wanting to borrow directly to people wanting to lend.

There is a revolution in the name of cryptocurrencies. While trading in cryptocurrencies is not permitted in India, the technology behind them could transform the way you own financial or physical assets. It is possible to break down all tangible and intangible assets into tokens and trade. That can happen without the need for a stock exchange. There are many APIs created to allow trading strategies integrated with the online trading mechanism in the stock market.

Programmed trading will enable investors to manage their portfolios, move money from one market to another or hedge risks. Sharing information between financial institutions and other related businesses is not new. Banks already share information with companies that keep credit scores. You get a number based on your loan repayment record. A score of 750 and above is considered favourable by banks.

₹ 750
A minimum score considered favourable by banks

The promise is of the future

There is significant private equity money poured into such solutions. Rising internet access and low cost of bandwidth mean financial services can expand their reach. Companies that run the app CRED raised tens of millions of dollars last month to top over $2 bn in valuation. Many companies offer API solutions to be plugged into stock market trading systems or mutual fund investing.

The backbone of the digital era is based on the information you provide to your bank or your service provider. The data is held in multiple silos. Your service providers can share the information only if you allow. In most cases, the efficiency of the service provided to you is based on your permission to use your personal information. That means, whether you want to share or not share, you agree to all the terms and conditions when you need those services.

Data privacy is a concern for all. However, unless you share your information, it would not be possible for digital banking or a financial services provider to offer a relevant solution to you. Regulators around the world are debating the issue. The key is to decide on the use of data. Financial institutions are only holders of customer data. You are the owner of your information.

In India, account aggregators are intermediaries between financial institutions like banks, mutual funds, non-banking finance companies, insurance companies, depositories or others and users of such financial information.

Your consent matters

Any transfer of your personal information between these entities happens only based on explicit consent and with appropriate agreements or authorisations between the account aggregators, you and financial institutions, according to M Rajeshwar Rao, deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India. He spoke at length on open banking at a recent event. He called open banking a potential disruptor in the financial system. However, he also highlighted concerns regulators like the RBI and around the world are addressing.

He flagged risks about financial privacy and data security. Only when the data privacy law pending in Parliament is passed in India will your data security concerns be addressed. He also said that the open API provides uncluttered access to customer (your) banking data such as transactions and balance stored within the infrastructure. "It may also pose a severe cybersecurity risk," the deputy governor told the gathering.

While fintech firms enhance your ability to do financial transactions on tap of your mobile phone screen, you need to upend your awareness. While it is tough to escape vulnerabilities to your data, you must ensure that you use external apps, products and services from trusted and regulated institutions.

(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

TODAY'S STOCK PICK

Current Price ₹560.75

Target Price ₹665

DABUR

The investment case for Dabur is being strengthened supported by focus on the core, power brand strategy, a spate of new launches, an increasing direct distribution reach, the narrowing gap on analytics v/s domestic peers, and cost savings, which are being plowed back into the business in the form of higher ads.

— Motilal Oswal Securities Limited

Disclaimer: The views and recommendations made above are that of the individual analyst or broking company, and not that of *TNIE*.

EXPRESS READ

JSW Steel to raise oxygen supply

New Delhi: Private steel maker JSW Steel on Sunday said it will increase its daily oxygen supply limit to 900 tonne/day by the end of this month. On the directions of the Ministry of Steel, steel plants are supplying liquid medical oxygen (LMO) to various states for Covid-19 treatment. Currently, it said it is supplying 185 tonne of LMO per day.

Oriental Hotels net loss at ₹4.6 cr

New Delhi: Oriental Hotels Ltd, an associate company of The Indian Hotels Company Ltd, has reported a standalone net loss for the quarter ending March 31, 2021 at ₹4.64 crore. The company, which has several hotels, including the Taj Coromandel in Chennai, registered a net loss at `18 lakh during the corresponding quarter last year.

Muthoot Microfin to raise ₹350 cr

New Delhi: Muthoot Microfin is planning to raise ₹350 crore by selling shares during the current year to fund business growth. The microfinance arm of Muthoot Pappachan Group is also looking to raise ₹100 crore from Tier-II bonds. The fundraising would be done through private placement to one or two investors towards December.

Markets to remain highly volatile this week amid rising Covid-19 cases

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE ever-rising Covid-19 infections in India will continue to deter investors' sentiment in the near future, say experts after the stock market ended in the red zone last week.

Benchmark indices fell about two per cent during the week ended April 23 as markets remained under severe pressure due to record surge in Covid cases — over three lakh cases per day, the highest in the world — and restrictions placed by several state governments. On Friday, the BSE Sensex slipped 202 points to close the week at 47,878.45, while the Nifty fell 64.8 points to 14,341.35.

"Indian markets are likely to continue with volatility till Covid-19 cases continue the upward trajectory. Investors would continuously watch out the government's course of action along with progress on vaccination drive," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

According to Rusmik Oza, Executive Vice President, Head of Fundamental Research, Kotak Securities, the fresh lockdowns and restrictions being imposed by various state governments will impact demand and also business activity. The persistent rise in hard commodity prices is a threat which could weigh on margins of many manufacturing companies. "Too many potential negatives have come together which could impact markets in the very near future," said Oza. Investors will also keep an eye on the monthly expiry of April month derivatives contracts, core sector data and Q4 earnings.

Prominent companies such as SBI Cards, Tech Mahindra, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance, Britannia, Maruti Suzuki, TVS Motor, Bajaj Auto, Titan, IndusInd Bank, Marico and Reliance Industries will announce their results this week.

Angel Broking in its note said that the markets are completely clueless which way to move in the near term. "At higher levels, we are facing some pressure as the pandemic continues and on the lower side, bulls are not willing to give up. Hence, it has become very difficult to take any kind of directional call," it said. Technical view wise, further downside may also be possible which could drag the index till 14000-13900/46500-46000. On the flip side, 14500/48300 would be the immediate hurdle for the Nifty/ Sensex, above the same uptrend structure will continue up to 14700/49100. Ahead of the monthly F&O expiry, the sectors which would be in focus are banking, metal and pharma, added Kotak.

Unabated surge in infections may prompt hike in insurance premiums

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Chennai

IF Covid-19 infections continue to rise unabated, insurance companies may be forced to hike their premiums by as much as 15 per cent to deal with the parallely increasing number of Covid-related claims. Industry executives have noted over the past week that the rate of claim settlements are unsustainable for insurers unless the rate of growth in Covid-19 cases is arrested.

For instance, Max Bupa's Bhabatosh Mishra, Director Underwriting, Products and Claims, said last week that while how much premiums may be hiked depended on several factors, the current trend in terms of claims and settlements was unsustainable. "We were adversely impacted even during the first wave. The second wave has been far more intense than the first one and claim ratios, which were already worse than planned, is under further strain. Whether or not and how much premium revision will be needed will depend on how the pandemic goes and how much can we absorb. One thing is for sure, the current trend is not sustainable," Mishra said in an interview to news agency PTI.

Industry executives this publication spoke to confirm that there has been a sharp deterioration in the claims ratio due to the significant increase in Covid-19 cases. According to sources, in terms of value, Covid-related claims last fiscal year (FY21) were about a fifth of the total health insurance premiums collected. And while other claims have gone down since many patients have put off postponable procedures, the steady rise in Covid-19 cases and the subsequent claims, has put pressure on insurers' earnings.

Insurance regulator IRDAI, for its part, has again reiterated that insurers are to settle Covid-19 related claims in an expeditious manner.

One analyst, who wished to remain unnamed, said that there is already movement towards reprising Covid insurance products and the next few weeks may see certain insurers approach the regulator to refile their products with a hike in premiums. "The claim requests being raised to insurers due to the second wave of Covid is bound to further impact the portfolio of insurance companies," Mishra had said.

IRDAI data shows that Covid-19 related claims stood at around ₹17,000 crore in FY21. Out of the total number of claims filed, Covid claims were around 7 per cent, but this figure has seen a sharp increase during the first few weeks of April. Up to February 2021, health insurers collected a total premium of ₹52,886.54 crore.

Younger population affected too

Unlike the first wave, which largely saw individuals over 60 needing hospitalisation, this time, even younger people have had to seek emergency medical help. For Max Bupa, the average claim paid for children was `91,000 and, in some cases, it has gone up to `12 lakh.

15% Expected hike in premiums

If premium revision will be needed will depend on how the pandemic goes and how much can we absorb. The current trend is not sustainable

Bhabatosh Mishra, Director (underwriting, products & claims), Max Bupa

Network hospitals can't deny cashless claims to Covid-19 patients: IRDAI

Hospitals are obligated to provide cashless treatment for Covid-19 where insurers have a prior arrangement with the hospitals for providing cashless facility

IRDAI

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has clarified that network hospitals have to facilitate cashless insurance claims of Covid-19 patients where insurers have a prior arrangement. The regulator has also directed insurance companies to take 'appropriate action' against network hospitals denying cashless service for any treatments, including treatment for Covid-19.

This clarification comes in the backdrop of reports that some private hospitals are not granting cashless facilities for treatment of Covid-19 and instead insisting on cash payments despite policyholders being entitled for the cashless treatment under the policy. Taking a stern view of the matter, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had earlier held talks with IRDAI chairman SC Khuntia on the problems some have faced and the need to address it. Sitharaman had earlier tweeted, "Reports are being received of some hospitals denying cashless insurance. Spoken to chairman, IRDAI Shri SC Khuntia to act immediately. In March'20 #Covid included as a part of comprehensive health insurance. Cashless available at networked or even temporary hospitals."

All the Network Providers (hospitals) who have signed Service Level Agreements (SLA) with general and health insurers have to mandatorily provide cashless facilities for any treatment to the policyholders including Covid-19 treatment in accordance with agreed provisions of SLA and terms and conditions of policy contract. In the event of denial of cashless facility, the aggrieved policyholders may send a complaint to the concerned insurer The details and email ids of grievance redressal officers of insurance companies can be accessed from the website of the companies.

MFs ADD 81 LAKH INVESTOR ACCOUNTS IN FY21

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE mutual fund industry added more than 81 lakh investor accounts in 2020-21, taking the total tally to 9.78 crore, and experts hope that the healthy growth in folios would continue in the ongoing fiscal also. The industry had added 72.89 lakh investor accounts in 2019-20, according to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI). Industry executives said investors are increasingly acknowledging the importance of making investments in mutual funds for meeting financial goals both long term and short term. The number of folios with 43 fund houses rose to 9,78,65,529 in March, according to data.

England football announces 4-day social media boycott

English football is uniting to boycott social media for four days in response to relentless online abuse of players. The blackout of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram will begin next Friday and last until Monday, covering a full round of games in the men's and women's professional leagues. It will be undertaken by the FA, Premier League, English Football League, Women's Super League.

Lack of invites from Euro events hits Sreeshankar

Long-jumper hopes early vaccination will allow him to travel abroad for preparation

MARTIN JOSEPH @ Kochi

DESPITE having booked his place for the Tokyo Olympics and re-writing his own national record in the process recently, long jump sensation M Sreeshankar is a concerned man these days. With the date for the quadrennial event nearing, Sreeshankar is hoping to participate in some international meets to get some experience under his belt.

However, the second wave of Covid-19 outbreak has put a spanner in his plans as he is not getting invites to these athletic meets abroad.

"We had a plan to go to Europe to participate in competitions by May end and the first week of June. That was our plan but we couldn't have predicted such a situation and now we are having a difficult time procuring visa. This has become a major challenge as India has been categorised as a red zone country. The meet organisers in Europe are not even giving invitations to the Indian athletes which makes everything even harder," said Sreeshankar.

The 22-year-old underlined the importance of participating in international events and going on exposure tours, especially for the Olympic-bound athletes. The Olympic-bound athletes are expected to be given priority when it comes to the vaccines but the Palakkad native said he will follow the guidelines of the Athletic Federation of India when it comes to that. "So far there has been no notification regarding the vaccine. We will consult with the AFI and the doctors and take their advice on this when it is made accessible and time to take it. But to go abroad and compete, we'll probably have to take the vaccine and convince the meet organisers that it is safe for us to compete. If we manage to reach Europe, then it will be fine I guess to compete and train there," he said.

Sreeshankar is currently training back at his base in Palakkad but he is desperate to start participating in competitive events. "This is the Olympic year and if one has to go there and put in a good performance, then we really need good exposure. Participating in two or three good competitions will itself boost our confidence. The AFI has told us they will provide all support when it comes to visas but the biggest hurdle is that we are not getting invitations. Let's hope that after vaccination, they are ready to let us compete there," he said.

OUR IPL SPACE

On the ground, there is anguish and anxiety. From trying to manage a bed at hospitals to acquiring oxygen for Covid patients, reality is staring at you without remorse. Here are a few such frames from across the country

Relatives shifting an elderly person on to a stretcher outside the casualty ward of a hospital in Bhubaneswar on Sunday

A Covid 19-infected patient uses oxygen provided by an NGO, Hemkunt Foundation, at Sector 42 in Gurugram on Sunday

Migrant labourers try to board a bus to their native places in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, from Gurugram, on Sunday

A patient is shifted to a broken stretcher for primary treatment outside LLR Hospital in Kanpur on Sunday

People wait to refill their medical oxygen cylinders for patients at an oxygen refilling station in New Delhi on Sunday. The national capital is facing shortage of oxygen cylinders ever since the numbers spiked | PHOTOS: SHEKHAR YADAV, BISWANATH SWAIN & PTI

EXPRESS READ

Amit settles for bronze at Guv Cup in Russia

NEW DELHI: Olympic-bound Indian boxer Amit Panghal (52kg) settled for a bronze medal at the Governor's Cup in St Petersburg, Russia after going down to world champion and familiar foe Shakhobidin Zoirov in the semifinals. Amit lost 0-5 to the Uzbek, who is also the reigning Olympic champion. This was the Indian's second loss to Zoirov after the 2019 world championships.

Novak loses to Karatsev in Belgrade semifinals

BELGRADE: World No 1 Novak Djokovic suffered a second surprise loss in as many weeks as he was knocked out by Russia's Aslan Karatsev in the Belgrade semifinals. The 28th-ranked Karatsev saved 23 of 28 break points to advance to his second final of the year following a 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 victory, gaining a measure of revenge for his defeat by Djokovic in the last four of the Australian Open.

Goa seek win to stay in contention of KO berth

MARGAO: Back-to-back defeats may have dented their confidence but FC Goa's maiden campaign in the AFC Champions League ACL can still be revived if they beat Al Rayyan of Qatar in a reverse fixture here on Monday. The two sides played out a 0-0 draw in their earlier Group E match though the Qatari side had dominated most part of the game. Goa are still in the reckoning for a Round of 16 spot.

Barcelona capitalise after Madrid play a draw against Real Betis

AFP @ Barcelona

BARCELONA took over as Atletico Madrid's chief challengers for the title on Sunday as Antoine Griezmann scored a quick-fire double in a 2-1 win away at Villarreal in La Liga.

Barcelona's win comes on the back of Real Madrid playing a 0-0 stalemate at home to Real Betis on Saturday. Real Madrid struggled for chances and the concern will be that numerous injuries and fatigue are catching up with Zinedine Zidane's side at a crucial moment in the season.

Three goals in seven minutes before half-time saw Villarreal take the lead and then swiftly throw it away as Griezmann equalised with a sumptuous lob before capitalising on a misplaced backpass to make it two. Helped by a red card for Villarreal's Manu Trigueros shortly after the hour, Barcelona held on for a win that puts them level on points with Real Madrid, having a played a game less than the reigning champions.

Atletico are two points further in front and can extend that gap to five by beating a struggling Athletic Bilbao side at San Mames later on Sunday.

Since losing the Clasico earlier this month, Barcelona have strung together three consecutive victories and with a game at home to Atletico still to come, Ronald Koeman's side still have the title in their hands.

Griezmann started on the bench for the defeat by Real Madrid but has been recalled for the last three games in a row, repaying the faith with a goal now in each.

Women archers clinch WC gold

PTI @ Guatemala City

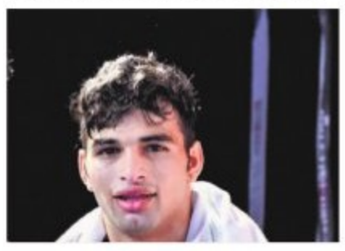
INDIAN women's recurve team held its nerve to pip Mexico 5-4 (27-26) in an intriguing final to grab a gold medal in the Archery World Cup Stage 1 here on Sunday.

Locked 4-4 in the shoot-off, the Indian team comprising seasoned Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Komalika Bari shot 27 to edge out their Mexican rivals by one point and claim their first World Cup team gold after seven years. This is Deepika's fifth World Cup stage event team gold medal. Deepika showed utmost composure to drill a perfect 10 in the final arrow of the shoot-off to put pressure on the 2012 London Olympics silver medalist Aida Roman who needed a nine but only to drift away for a poor eight score.

Ankit sets sights on 2022 Commonwealth Games

ANMOL GURUNG @ Chennai

WITH a historic eight gold medals in the just-concluded AIBA Youth Boxing World Championships in Poland, Indian boxers deservedly made the headlines. It was their best-ever performance in the marquee event, a clear indicator that the future of the sport in the country is promising. Ankit Narwal, one of the three bronze medallist, fell just short of the main target but he displayed enough promise too.



Back in the country after his gritty effort, the Haryana pugilist is content with what he could deliver during the tournament. The 64-kg boxer won four bouts during the competition, before losing to Kazakastan's Sabirzhan Akkalykov in a split decision. Akkalykov marched on to become the champion. "This was my first time at the World Championships. This was a big learning curve for me," Ankit, winner of 2019 Asian Youth Boxing Championships silver medal, said.

It has been a eye-opener for everyone with the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic situation. It was no different for young minds like Ankit, who had been preparing for this tournament for the last six months or so. "We had no clue if the even would happen or not. We were training at our homes, but the intensity of training was not something that could help us do well at a tournament like World Championships. And when you're at home, you are bound to gain weight. We had to endure a tricky phase but it was good."

Ankit's love for the sport comes from father Sahab Singh Narwal. Against odds, Sahab has introduced the sport to many promising boxers including 2019 World Championships silver medallist Manju Rani. "I have a great bond with my father. Having started at a young age, I have always had that comfort level with him. He owns small portion of land and his only motivation is to see the boxers do well," the three-time Khelo India champ said.

After getting picked up by SAI and youth India team, Narwal said that he has grown as a boxer and that had handed him confidence ahead of Worlds meet. "It has been a tough battle, both mentally and physically. It took some time to overcome that. My game was also down for a bit, but I had worked on that and improved much before this event," Ankit.

Now, Ankit's main goal is to break into the senior team. "I want to win gold in the senior nationals and earn a spot for 2022 Commonwealth Games."

78,113 attend Australian Rules football match

MELBOURNE: More than 78,000 Australian Rules football fans crowded the Melbourne Cricket Ground Sunday to watch an Australian Football League match between Collingwood and Essendon ' the biggest crowd for a sports event since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The crowd of 78,113 topped the 67,000 who attended a T20I between India and England at Ahmedabad.

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF TELANGANA LIMITED

NOTICE

This is to inform that Stage -I apparoval is accorded for the proposal submitted vide application no. FP/TG/TRANS/29323/2017, for diversion of forest land to an extent of 4.4824Ha, in compt. No.241 of Kondapaka RF (between Girayipally and Mathpally Village limits), Siddipet division, Siddipet district, vide GOI, MoEF&CC, IRO, Chennai F.No. 4-TSB166/ 2020-CHN/109, Dt: 11-02-2021, for erection of 220KV DC line from 400/220/132KV SS at Gajwel to 220/132KV SS at Siddipet, in Siddipet District. Please verify the forest department website: forestclearance.nic.in, for other details and conditions.

Sd/- Chief Engineer/ Construction,
R.O.No. 06/21 TSTRANSCO,Vidyut Soudha, Hyderabad

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(CIN:U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No: SEE/Tr(M)/BRAZ/EE(O)/AEE-2/T5/20-21/189-190 Dt: 20.04.2021

TENDER NOTIFICATION (e-Procurement mode only)

KPTCL invites bid against Enquiry No.: **KPTCL/SEE/TR(M)/BRAZ/AEE-2/Sugatur trf/EPR-563/Call-3 dtd: 05.03.2021** for **"Dismantling, Transportation (To & Fro), Repair of Sick Power Transformer, Testing, Assembling, Erection and Commissioning of Repaired Sick Power Transformer of Rating 8 MVA, 66/11kV, Apex Make, Sl.No.T-920A/03 Year of Manufacture 1995 Lying at 66/11kV Sugatur Sub Station in TL&SS Division, Kolar Under BRAZ Circle, KPTCL, HEBBAL Bengaluru on Total Turn Key Basis" (Call-3).**

The bids will be received through e-Procurement mode only. The detailed notification regarding the subject tenders can be got by logging on to **www.kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink **"e-Procurement-KPTCL"** or **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **26.04.2021.**

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NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

NIT NO. AMD/Admn-IV/ET-1/2021-22 Date: 12.04.2021

Director, AMD, DAE, on behalf of the President of India invites online item rate tender (in two part) through e-tendering mode from reputed, qualified, experienced, technically and financially sound agencies for the work - **"Engaging agency to conduct end-to-end on-line recruitment process for recruitment of Scientific/Technical /Administrative /Auxiliary posts in AMD through Direct Recruitment mode."** Estimated cost: ₹ 2,54,11,000/- (inclusive of all taxes), EMD: NIL. However, it is mandatory to submit **BID SECURITY DECLARATION FORM** in lieu of Earnest Money Deposit (E.M.D). Completion period :12 months, Cost of tender processing fee **5,900.00** in the form of e-payment. Detailed tender notice along with other documents are available on website: <www.tenderwizard.com/DAE>. Tender documents are available for view/download from **26.04.2021 (11:00 hrs.) to 11.05.2021 (17:00 hrs.).** Pre-bid queries from **11.05.2021 to 12.05.2021 (17:00 hrs.).** Date of Pre-bid meeting **17.05.2021 (1400 hrs)** Date of uploading of pre- bid clarifications on **20.05.2021**. Closing of online submission of tenders upto **17:00 hrs. on 24.05.2021.** Opening of online tender (Technical bids) on **27.05.2021 at 15:30 hrs.** Financial bids of qualified bidders shall be opened at a later date to be notified separately. Detailed NIT is also available on website <www.amd.gov.in> for view only. For further clarification, please contact on 040-27776417/320.

NO HOLDING BACK

Teams cannot walk away from Super League: Perez

ASSOCIATED PRESS @ Madrid

REAL Madrid's president insists all 12 clubs that signed up for the ill-fated Super League are still bound by contract to launching the controversial breakaway of Europe's elite soccer teams.

In an interview with Spanish sports daily *AS* on Saturday, Madrid president Florentino Perez said the clubs can't back out like some have announced.

"The fact is, the clubs can't leave," Perez said. "Some, because of the pressure, have had to say they'll leave. But this project, or something very similar, will happen, and I hope it's in the near future."

All six English clubs — Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham — backed away from the proposal within 48 hours of its unveiling last weekend because of a backlash by fans and authorities. Atletico Madrid and Inter Milan followed suit a day later.

Barcelona has maintained its support for a project president Joan Laporta says is "absolutely necessary" for his troubled club's finances, while acknowledging that the scheme's critics must be listened to.

Italian heavyweights Juventus and AC Milan admitted the project was going nowhere immediately, while leaving open the possibility of joining a Super League at a later date.

The 74-year-old Perez, who has presided over Madrid for most of the past two decades, was supposed to be the first chairman of the Super League of 20 teams that would replace the Champions League run by UEFA. Perez denied reports that US financier JP Morgan Chase had also deserted the project. "That's not true, they haven't left either. They've taken time to reflect, like the 12 clubs," he said. "If something needs to be changed, it'll be changed, but the Super League is the best project we've thought can be carried out."

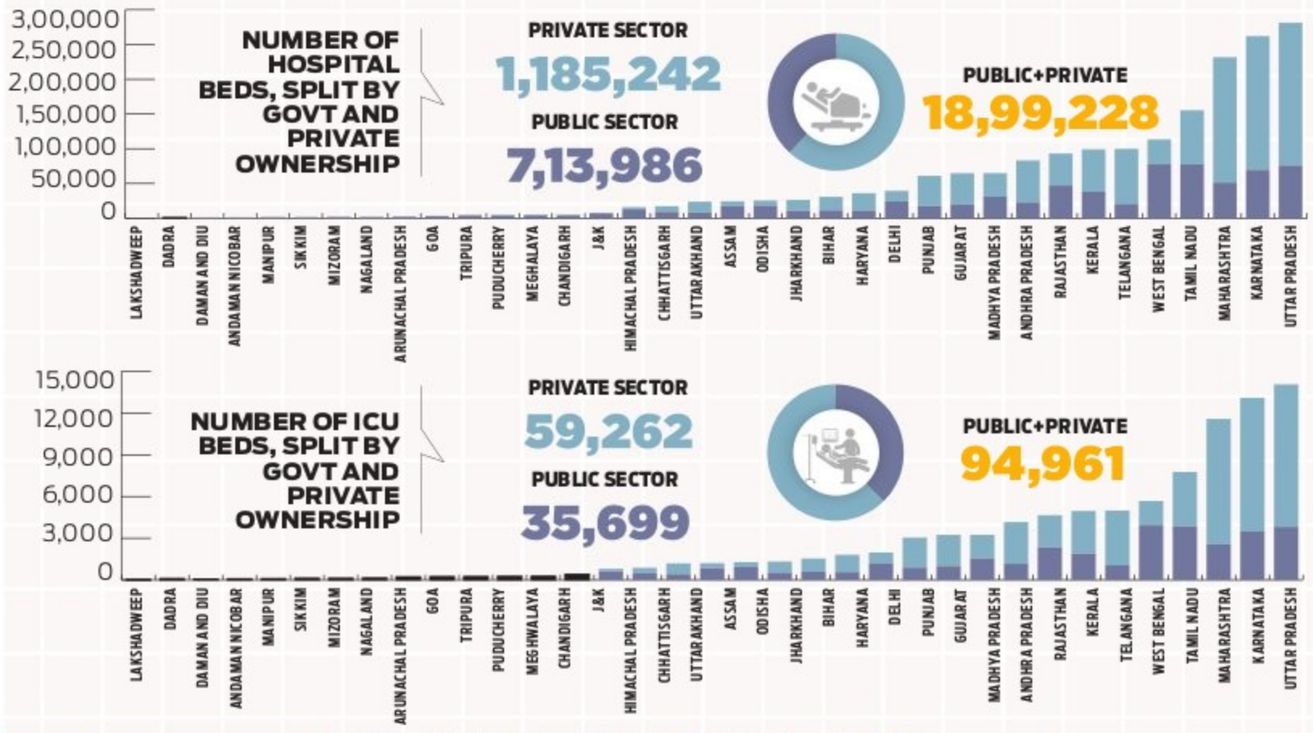
The Madrid president maintained his position that the pandemic has aggravated the financial troubles big clubs face, including what he said was the dwindling interest of soccer among young people. He predicted a grim future for his club and others.

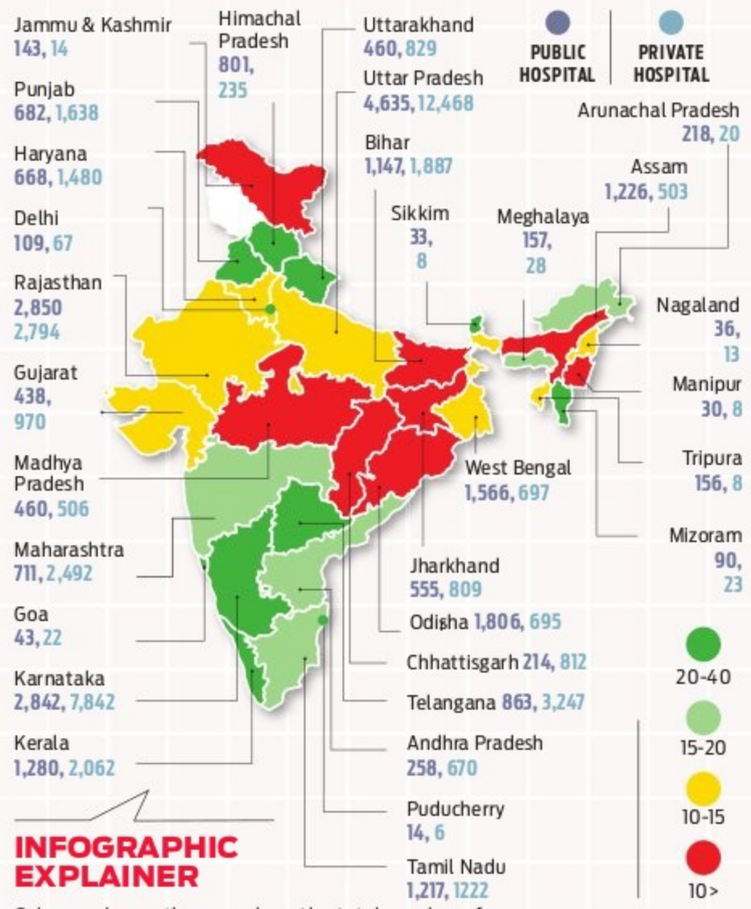
"Either we fix this ... or all the clubs go bankrupt," he said. "There will be a mutiny of the teams as they go bankrupt, because the only ones who will survive will be state financed clubs or who have multimillionaire owners, who are willing, for their own entertainment, to lose hundreds of millions (of euros) each season."

Google has developed a custom chip, Argos, for YouTube to process videos much more efficiently. Google's Jeff Calow said the chip has brought "up to 20-33x improvements in computing efficiency" and is meant for Google's warehouse-scale computing system. The VCU package is a full-length PCI-E card and looks a lot like a graphics card.

QUANTIFYING OUR HEALTH INFRA

With social media and chat groups getting flooded with requests for beds, oxygen and medical supplies from relatives of Covid-19 patients — amid realisation that the second wave of Covid caught the country napping — here's a quick overview, based on govt data collated by Princeton researchers, of India's health resources



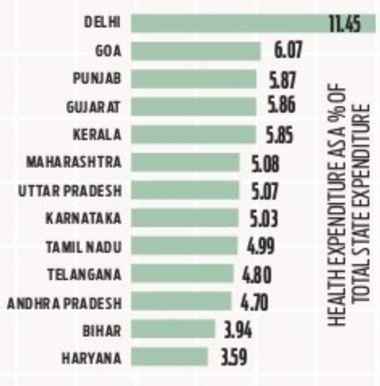


INFOGRAPHIC EXPLAINER

Colour codes on the map show the total number of hospital beds (private & government) in each state/UT per 10,000 population. Figures next to a state's name indicate the number of private & government hospitals

VENTILATORS IN INDIA

A coronavirus patient lays on a stretcher in a hospital complex in New Delhi as he waits for admission | AFP



TYPE OF HEALTHCARE FACILITY INDIANS TEND TO GO TO WHEN THEY ARE SICK, VALUES IN %

Healthcare service provider	Percentage of treated ailments		
	Rural	Urban	All
Government/public hospital	32.5	26.2	30.1
Private hospital	20.8	27.3	23.3
Charitable/trust/NGO-run hospital	0.9	1.3	1.1
Private doctor/ in private clinic	41.4	44.3	42.5
Informal health care provider	4.3	0.9	3.0
All	100.0	100.0	100.0

Data sources: National Health Profile 2019; "COVID-19 in India: State-wise estimates of current hospital beds, intensive care unit (ICU) beds and ventilators", Kapoor, G. et al., 2020; National Sample Survey 75th Round Report. Population figures used in the map are from UIDAI.
Note: Figures on number of private hospitals and beds were estimated by Princeton university researchers in the study cited above. Data for ICU beds is based on the resesearchers' assumption that they are 5% of the overall beds, and that 50% of ICU beds are equipped with ventilators

COMPILED BY: ARAVINDAKSHAN S

US mulling over sending Astra doses to India: Fauci

MEDICINE

WASHINGTON The United States will consider sending surplus AstraZeneca vaccines to India, as backlash over its stockpile grows, top US pandemic advisor Anthony Fauci said on Sunday.

Western nations including Britain and Germany have pledged help as India's coronavirus crisis grows, driving increases in global case numbers in recent days.

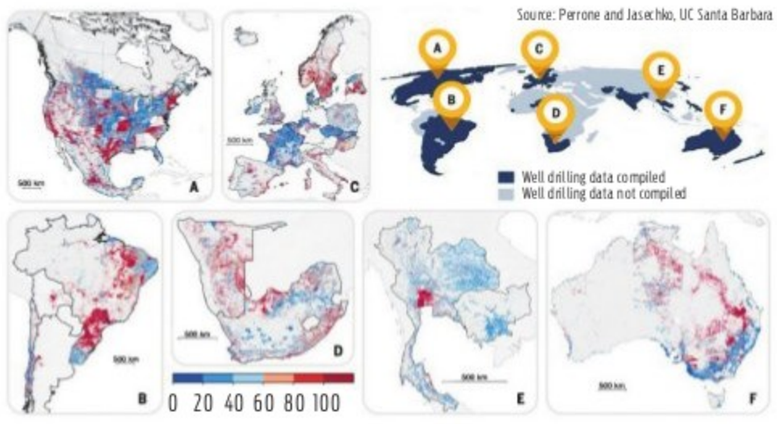
"We really need to do more. I don't think you can walk away from that," Fauci told ABC's *This Week* news programme.

The US has around 30 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine that are not approved for use in the country, and Fauci said the idea of sending them to India will be "something that is up for active consideration."

He also said the United States is discussing "really ramping up what we can do on the ground, oxygen supplies, drugs, tests, PPE, as well as taking the look into the intermediate and long run about how we can get vaccines to these individuals, both immediately now, as well as in the situation where you help them to be able to essentially make vaccines themselves."

He spoke a day after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington was "working closely with our partners in the Indian government, and we will rapidly deploy additional support to the people of India and India's health care heroes."

1 in 5 global groundwater wells at risk of running dry



Groundwater depth in metres below surface

SCIENCE

PARIS: Up to 20 per cent of all the groundwater wells in the world are at risk of going dry in the near future, warn environmental scientists.

Researchers from the University of California, Santa Barbara examined records made of well construction for approximately 39 million wells around the world.

They found that between 6 and 20 per cent of all of the wells around the world currently sit at no more than 16 feet below the water table in which they exist.

This means that they are at risk of going dry in the coming decades, according to Scott Jasechko and Debra Perrone from the varsity. The findings were published in *Science*.

They also found that new well construction has, in many instances, not taken into consideration the reduced levels of groundwater, and therefore have not been dug deeper than older wells.

This practice will lead to the new wells running dry just as quickly as the older wells, the researchers said.

A similar study led by James Famiglietti and Grant Ferguson from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, and published in *Science*, revealed that the reason for shrinking volumes of water in aquifers is that humans remove more water than nature can replenish. In addition to the massive amounts of water withdrawn from underground sources, many places have also begun to experience extended droughts due to global warming.

DAY OF TRADITION

Women walk near "The April 25 House of Culture" theatre in Pyongyang on the 89th anniversary of the founding of the country's army | AFP

Bitcoin millionaire seeks currency ban

CLIMATE

BERLIN: A German software developer who made a fortune from bitcoin has given the environmentalist Green Party one of the biggest political donations in the country's history in hopes it will win this year's national election — and consider banning the digital currency.

Moritz Schmidt's donation of 1 million euros ($1.2 million) to the Greens made headlines this month, as the party traditionally receives only small sums. Such a large gift is rare in German politics. Parties in the country receive most of their funding from members' dues and state aid linked to election results.

"I have benefitted immensely from the bitcoin bubble. It's been a wild ride, and the proceeds are unearned riches really," Schmidt told The Associated Press in an email interview this week. "I've been sort of waiting for the right opportunity to donate a larger sum."

The 39-year-old from the northeastern town of Greifswald, who hadn't previously featured on any lists of major political donors, said he bought "a couple thousand euros" worth of bitcoin in 2011, shortly before it crashed, wiping 90% off the value of his holdings. Since then, bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies have repeatedly surged and slumped on investors hoping to turn a quick profit.

The value of a single bitcoin has dropped from over $64,000 to about $50,000 in the past ten days.

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DAY'S DIARY

Record in the making

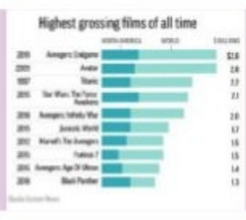
Avengers: Endgame, a direct sequel to Avengers: Infinity War and 22nd movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, premiered on this day in 2019

BIG WIN

It officially dethroned Avatar, after its impressive 10-year run, as the highest grossing film. Endgame earned $2.79 billion at the global box office, surpassing Avatar's $2.7897 billion

FROM THE GET-GO

This film earned $60 million in Thursday night previews, breaking the $57 million record held by Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens (2015)



MANY A VICTORY

It is the first film to reach over a billion dollars during its opening weekend in theaters. It has numerous other box office records to its name too

Raj B Shetty opens about his next venture

PG 4

GETTING OVER THE FEAR

While fear and worry rule the roost, for even people far from the danger of Covid, healing techniques offer a much-needed respite

Priyanka Row

MONIKA MONALISA

Bengaluru now has over two lakh active Covid cases. The numbers are surely alarming to send shock waves among people.

Though those who are safe at home have many reasons to feel grateful, the situation outside surely has affected them mentally, in the form of anxiety and restlessness. People are approaching life coaches and adopting healing techniques like pranic healing, soil therapy and social media detox to stay calm.

Mita Vinay, founder of Bodhsara Wellness and Salt Studio in Kormangala, says they have seen a surge in the number of the clients opting for pranic healing at their studio. "For the last one month, there has been an increase in number of people going for pranic healing; four-five clients taking the treatment every day. And it's not just Covid-recovered patients but absolutely healthy people who are at home but are heavily affected by the current situation," says Vinay, adding that one of the main reasons for this kind of anxiety is that people were not ready for severity of the situation, and the cases have now started coming closer home.

But, what is pranic healing? Vinay explains. "*Prana* is nothing but the breath you take in. During stress or anxiety, it starts forming various blockages, which stops the flow of energy. Pranic healers recognise those blockages and release them."

Luke Coutinho

Apart from pranic healing, the Bodhsara is known for other healing techniques like cupping and salt therapy. But, considering the danger of stepping out, pranic healing is the most considered one since it can be done online.

Breaking it down further, about why fear over the virus is affecting people mentally, mind coach Priyanka Row says that the human mind always looks for familiarity with the environment. "Once you take a person out of their comfort zone, things like depression, anxiety and panic slip in," says Row, who follows a technique called Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). She claims that while other things like picking up a hobby or listening to music definitely helps, after a point of time, it turns into a Bandaid for one mental health issue. But EFT, on other hand, does not just help you release emotional baggage but also helps to deal with a situation without any negative perspective, she says.

"Energy can't be destroyed and when a bad energy stays, it keeps growing with every situation. So, when you see anything bad, it acts like a trigger, leading to depression and anxiety," says Row, adding that EFT helps remove those triggers.

Soil therapy for the soul

If you are more of a nature lover, life and nutrition coach, Luke Coutinho, co founder of Cafe Reset Kormangala. has a simple hack. It's called soil therapy, which also helps in building immunity. He recommends everyone to get some soil, put it in a bowl and just play with it. "If you can garden, get your hands dirty with soil; that's even better. Otherwise, 5-10 minutes of playing with the soil is scientifically proven today," says Coutinho.

GRUB HUB

Monika Manchanda, a city-based food writer and consultant, co-founder and chief culinary officer at LiveAltLife, dishes out food-related trivia in this weekly series. So, answer these questions and find out how much of a foodie you are.

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'**

The correct answers and names of the first three respondents are published here. The first prize winner this week will receive a complimentary voucher (worth ₹2,500) on takeaway food from Lazy Suzy, which can be redeemed from all its Bengaluru outlets**

THE RIGHT ANSWERS

1) Girmit 2) Dosa topped with lemon baath (rice), aloo masala and chutney in Nagarpet street carts 3) Indiana Burgers

FIRST THREE TO GET IT RIGHT

1 Ryan Rozario
2 Shalinimanohar Dhali
3 Samarth Manohar

****Conditions apply**

Pastel hues for the win

Intimate weddings and events are now a reason to opt for soft yet special pastels, says celebrity designer Rashmi Anoop Rai, offering the story of her collection

EXPRESS FEATURES

Owing to the increasing number of Covid cases, the idea of celebrations looks like a thing of the past. As events and functions grow smaller and more intimate, the dressing-up culture too has evolved to keep up with the change. Celebrity designer Rashmi Anoop Rai, who is known for dressing A-listers in Sandalwood, has come up with a new collection on pastels to go with the trend.

Rai says that with events and family gatherings getting intimate, more than bold colours and gaudy designs, people are going for understated designs. "Pastel hues are so much in vogue and looks subtle and classic. Most of the time, it's pastel what couples prefer—be it nudes, offwhites, ecru, dusty blue or mauve," she says. Whether it's *sangeet*, *mehendi*, cocktail, *muhurtam* or reception, usually a couple or even the family likes the outfits to be more colour-coordinated with the decors. Then, the pastels really help in sobering down the grandeur, yet retain its classiness.

Rai's collection has a heavy usage of embellishments, where the star attraction of the whole attire is one element — whether it's the blouse or the skirt. "The collection has embellishments on the blouse which stand out. Off late, people love to have embellishments in such a way that it camouflages with the fabric and only shows up through the textile," explains Rai.

While Covid has been a dampener this year, Rai still went ahead with her collection because she believes a fresh piece of attire can cheer up any person. "Though the situation is bad, people are still looking for ways to come out of it. And fashion is not just about the trends but but also art," says Rai. Having been associated with film industry since 2017, she has worked as costume designer for more than 15 movies and is currently looking forward to six releases this year.

CITY READ

Chitra Aravind spearheads virtual dance festival

Artist Chitra Arvind, in association with Rhythmotion India, is organising TAVAS, an Indian Classical and Contemporary dance performance, as part of ResiliDance 2021 virtual biannual dance festival conducted by the Indian Dance Educators Association (IDEA), based in DC Metro area, USA. The online event is scheduled for April 29 and April 30. For tickets, visit ideadancers website.

Bosch dedicates its sports complex as Covid Care Centre

The second wave of coronavirus has resulted in an alarming shortage of beds in hospitals and care centres. In an effort to help the government of Karnataka plug this gap, Bosch has converted its sports complex at Adugodi campus into a Covid Care Centre (CCC) and handed it over to BBMP for the cause. The Adugodi CCC houses over 70 beds. The centre also attempts to ensure round-the-clock medical care, meals, beds and Internet access. The facility is now officially open to both the general population, and immediate family members and/or direct dependents of Bosch India employees.

A fitting tribute

Kannada star Puneeth Rajkumar released a musical video as a tribute to mark the 92nd birth anniversary of his father and Sandalwood icon Dr Rajkumar. The actor posted a soulful song that runs along with some of the old pictures of Dr Rajkumar. The video garnered a great response and fans have shared the track widely on social media.

ARTS CORNER

A MUSICAL ESCAPE

EXPRESS FEATURES

A world away from the current reality that is perfect and with someone who is just right for you. *Mr Sunshine* brings you that, in the form of a dreamy and romantic song. Twenty-two-year-old singer Vandita Narayan combines her powerful vocals and melodious guitar strains to enrich this fantasy world.

Listening to the song, one can easily guess that Narayan is a die-hard romantic; and she readily agrees. But, this song is more than just an expression of romance for the young singer; she calls it her breakthrough piece. "This song is laidback and has flowers and butterflies in it. But, my earlier songs mostly spoke about the dark side and lonely blues. Then, I realised, after all, the world is not that bad a place to live in; so, I wanted to show the brighter side of it," shares Narayan.

"On a serious note, it did help me find my element in music. Currently, we are all craving for little bit of positivity in life," she adds.

While writing the lyrics, she says, she also realised music is such a huge medium to express your emotions. "There are so many lines in the song that can immediately make someone feel special," she says. The song was made in collaboration with a guitarist in Mumbai, known by the name Devilwoman. "I have not met her in person. Through this song, I wanted to send a message of the power of music that can bring two people together from two cities," says Narayan, who has been singing professionally since 2016.

Vandita Narayan

A still from the music video

"I have been singing since the time I can remember. I used to be a bathroom singer but I thought it was high time I take it serious," says self-taught Narayan, who loves listening to pop, rock and RnB. She draws inspiration from Lana Del Ray, The Weekend and Green Day.

This song is laidback and has flowers and butterflies in it. But, my earlier songs mostly spoke about the dark side and lonely blues. I realised, after all, the world is not that bad a place to live in; so, I wanted to show the brighter side of it

WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

IPL FEAST

Enjoy this IPL season with a wide variety of authentic Chinese delicacies at the comfort of your home. The IPL special combo meal includes Asian green fried rice Shanghai Fried Rice, Veg Shanghai Noodles, prawn, chicken hakka noodles and more. Veg combo starting from Rs 199 plus taxes, Non-veg combo starting from Rs229 plus taxes. Applicable for home deliveries only **Where:** Chowman

MANGO MANIA

Khandani Rajdhani brings their famous Aamlicious Food Festival this year. The annual feast will be held till May 31, 2021, across all Khandani Rajdhani outlets in Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad. On the menu are aamras, aamrakhand, mango raita kachi kairi ring dhokla, ker sangri, mango pulao and mango jalebi.

MEXCIAN FIESTA

Enjoy a wide range of Mexican delicacies this summer as Foodhall is celebrating the culinary traditions of Mexican cuisine with Fiesta Mexicana. The food festival will celebrate the flavours of Mexico with a wide range of ingredients, live stations, baked meals, snack, and more throughout this month. **Where:** Foodhall stores **Details:** 7400444525

LAUGH OUT LOUD

Enjoy Gaurav Kapoor's show online as he makes fun of super-relatable observations and situations from all walks of life. His shows are a mix of observational humour and anecdotes where he narrates stories from corporate offices, festivals, 90's era, food, travel and his marriage. **When:** April 26 onwards **Where:** Zoom **Details:** Bookmyshow

ENJOY A SEAFOOD WITH DELICACY BARBEQUE FLAVOURED BUTTERFLY PRAWNS SATAY SERVED WITH MANGO SALSA AT SRIRACHA, INDIRANGAR WHEN: TILL MAY 30

COLD BREW FEST

Starbucks has announced the Cold Brew Fest that will be on till April 11. Select variants like Cold Brew Black, Nitro Cold Brew Black, Vegan Cold Brew, Nitro Vegan Cold Brew, Cold Brew with Ginger Ale, Nitro Cold Brew with Ginger Ale and more will be **available at** special prices of ₹250 for the Cold Brew range and ₹300 for the Nitro Cold Brew range (including taxes).

Mango Donuts

Enjoy a wide variety of soft fluffy donuts filled with mango jams dipped in white chocolate glaze, some topped with dark chocolate mousse and some adorned with mango-flavoured chocolate shavings and cheese creams. You can order through Zomato or Swiggy. **Where:** Mad over donuts, home delivery, When: Till May 31

IPL Feast

Enjoy a spread of special menu curated by Chef Vikas Seth for the cricket fans. The menu includes herb tossed epazote mushrooms, grilled zucchini and non-vegetarian specialties like cilantro marinated grilled shrimp and smoky chipotle chicken and exciting beverages. **Where:** Sanchez, UB City & Indiranagar **When:** Till May 30, 11am onwards

Decor collection

The Yellow Dwelling, a contemporary sustainable furnishing and décor expert, is introducing a collection of cushions, curtains, teepee tents and more for kids. **Where:** The Yellow Dwelling stores, HSR Layout **Details:** 96062 46004

Summer treats

Magnolia Bakery launches its summer dish- Mango Cheesecake. The sumer treat consists of creamy vanilla cheesecake, crackers and mangoes. **When:** Until April 30 **Cost:** Rs 320+ tax

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com.

OIL-FREE DOUBLE BEANS SABZI

INGREDIENTS

- **Fresh double beans:** 150 g
- **Tomato:** 2
- **Black pepper:** 1 tsp
- **Garlic:** 2 pods
- **Mint leaves** for garnish
- **Salt**

METHOD

- Blanch and puree the tomatoes.
- In a pan, boil the double beans with just enough water till tender.
- Add the tomato puree and salt, and cook in simmer till it thickens.
- Grind black pepper and garlic together to a fine powder and add to the sabzi. Mix well.
- Garnish with mint leaves and serve hot.

— Laxmi Vijaya, Bengaluru

FIT BIT

VIPASSANA
(MEDITATION)

In Sanskrit, 'Vipassana' means insight into the nature of reality. It also means intense or powerful, and 'passana' means seeing. Vipassana is one of India's most ancient meditation techniques. It is believed to have been rediscovered and taught by the Buddha, which focuses on purifying the mind and eliminating delusions, thereby ridding the individual of negative attachments such as pain, suffering and distress. It uses breathing, combined with meditation and observation of the mind and body, to acquire knowledge of the true reality. When perfected, Vipassana leads to Prajna (liberating wisdom) and, ultimately, Nirvana (the ultimate state of enlightenment and freedom from suffering).

STEPS

- Set aside 10 to 15 minutes to practise. Though it can be done any time, it is recommended to do this when you wake up.
- Choose a quiet area with little to no distractions.
- Sit on the ground. Cross your legs in a comfortable position. Now, engage your core, straighten your back and relax your body.
- Close your eyes and breathe normally. Focus on your natural breath and what you feel.
- Be mindful of each inhalation and exhalation.
- Try to observe your thoughts, feelings and sensations without reacting or judging.
- If you become distracted, simply observe the distraction and return to your breath.
- Aim to do this for at least 10 to 15 minutes when you first start. As you get used to this practice, work longer on this meditation.
- This is known as insight longer meditation. You practice self-observation by focusing on your inner self in a nonjudgmental way.

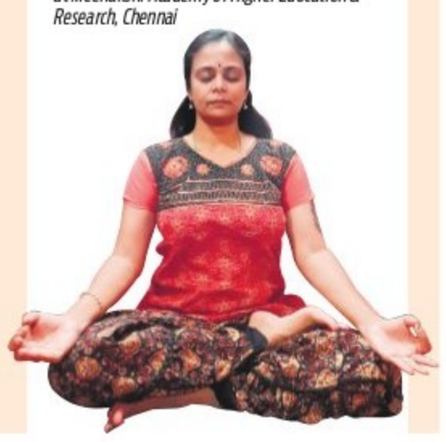
BENEFITS

- Helps one to understand the truth, both theoretically and practically.
- Gives the mind stronger motivation, effort, patience and contentment than before.
- Improves recollection, memory and makes one not negligent.
- Cultivates morality, concentration and wisdom, according to the Buddha's teaching.
- Makes people love one another, live in harmony, and become an exceptional person.
- Stops practitioner from being conceited or opinionated, holding themselves up or being arrogant.

LIMITATIONS

- Long-term practice is better than the short-term.

— by N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai



SOUND BOARD

ANUPAM CARES
Anupam shares the stories that happened off-screen. You'll hear about his childhood mischief in the hills of Shimla, the highs and lows of his early career, and the lessons learned along the way. And each episode, you'll also hear stories of unsung heroes from around the world.
- On Gaana.com

SADHGURU SPEAKS
Sadhguru, a Yogi, mystic and visionary, is a spiritual master with a difference. His life and work serve as a reminder that yoga is not an esoteric discipline from an outdated past, but a contemporary science, vitally relevant to our times.
- On Gaana.com

MANADHIL AMAIDHI VENDUM
A guided meditation series in Tamil, to make you feel at peace. The show focuses on self love and positivity which can be achieved through a mindful meditation exercise. Every episode offers a dedicated meditation.
- On Gaana.com

SHADOW
It's a popular crime thriller novel which is a detective centric story written by popular telugu writer Madhu Babu. Shadow is also expected to be made as a feature film in telugu soon.
- On Gaana.com

KADAL PURA
Kadal pura is a popular novel written by ace tamil writer Sandilyan who is known for writing stories by blending historical events. This audio drama offers the wholesome experience of feeling the richness of the story and characters involved.
- On Gaana.com

Courtesy: Gaana.com

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

SAARATHI
Rukmini is forcefully taken hostage by her enemy, Pratap, who wants to marry her. When Raja, her lover and a rickshaw driver by profession, finds out, he sets out for her hometown to rescue her.
- Cast: Darshan, Deepa Sannidhi, R Sarathkumar

HUDUGARU
Prabhu, Chandru and Siddesh aspire to have a government job and try to lead a simple lifestyle. But their lives change dramatically when they attempt to unite two lovers.
- Cast: Puneeth Rajkumar, Yogesh, Srinagar Kitty

HUBLI
A man, who is a terror to antisocial elements, loses his memory. He is chased by a policeman, who regards him as a terrorist.
- Cast: Sudeep, Rakshita

KODI PARAKKUTHU
A mafia leader tries to kill policeman Sivagiri, who took down his illegal businesses, with the help of a lookalike. Later, Sivagiri discovers that the leader is responsible for his father's death.
- Cast: ARS, Amala Akkineni, Bhagya

Scan this QR code to find out how your favourite celebs are coping with the lockdown.

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 LISTENING TO SHAME BY BRENE BROWN
Shame is an unspoken epidemic, the secret behind many forms of broken behavior. Brené Brown, whose earlier talk on vulnerability became a viral hit, explores what can happen when people confront their shame head-on. Her own humour, humanity and vulnerability shine through every word.

2 TEACH TEACHERS HOW TO CREATE MAGIC BY CHRISTOPHER EMDIN
What do rap shows, barbershop banter and Sunday services have in common? As Christopher Emdin says, they all hold the secret magic to enthral and teach at the same time — and it's a skill we often don't teach to educators. A longtime teacher himself, Emdin offers a vision to make the classroom come alive.

3 HOW TO TURN YOUR DISSATISFACTION INTO ACTION BY YVONNE AKI-SAWYERR
After the devastating rebel invasion of Freetown in 1999 and the Ebola epidemic in 2014, Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, mayor of the city, refused to be paralysed by her frustration with the status quo. Instead, she used her anger as a catalyst for action.

4 TECHNOLOGY HASN'T CHANGED LOVE. HERE'S WHY BY HELEN FISHER
In our tech-driven, interconnected world, we've developed new ways and rules to court each other, but the fundamental principles of love have stayed the same, says anthropologist Helen Fisher. Our faster connections, she suggests, are actually leading to slower, more intimate relationships.

5 3 THOUGHTFUL WAYS TO CONSERVE WATER BY LANA MAZAHREH
Nearly one in three people worldwide live in a country facing a water crisis, and less than five per cent of the world lives in a country that has more water today than it did 20 years ago. In this practical talk, Lana Mazahreh shares three lessons from water-poor countries on how to save water and address what's fast becoming a global crisis.

NOW STREAMING

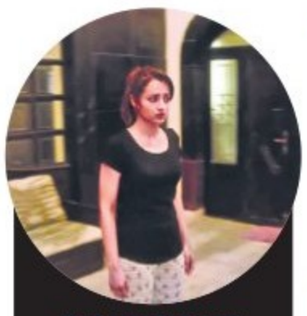
REGIONAL

SAINA (Hindi)
The story of Saina Nehwal, a professional badminton player who ranked number 1 in the sport.
Cast: Parineeti Chopra, Mukesh Agrohari, Olga Anand, Rohan Apte
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

THOTTAPPAN (Malayalam)
When his partner in crime goes missing, a small-time crook's life is transformed as he dedicates himself to raising the daughter his friend left behind.
Cast: Vinayakan, Priyamvada Krishnan, Manoj K. Jayan
- Watch on: Netflix

AGENT SAI SRINIVASA ATHREYA (Telugu)
Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya is an authentic humorous investigative thriller revolving around the adventures of a detective based out of Nellore.
Cast: Naveen Polishetty, Shruti Sharma, Shredha Rajagopalan
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

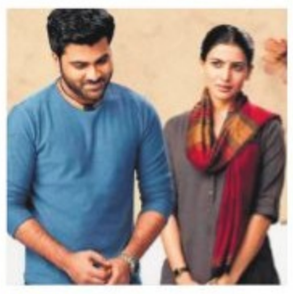
ROBERRT (Kannada)
Raghava lives in Lucknow with his son Arjun and is the head cook in a Brahmin's catering unit. He leads a peaceful existence, wanting the best for his son. All seems to go well, until some skeletons come tumbling out of his closet and he is forced to take on his original avatar.
Cast: Darshan, Asha Bhatt
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video



PARAMAPADHAM VILAYATTU (Tamil)
The local party leader gets hospitalised, Dr Gayathri tries her best to cure him, but he dies. The leader's son is forced to take over while Dr Gayathri tells him about the conspiracy over his father's death.
Cast: Trisha Krishnan, Nandha, Richard Rishi
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

JATHI RATNALU (Telugu)
The plot revolves around the three prisoners. They get released and plan for a happy life outside. Things take a new turn and bring in a twist. Can they find happiness and love now?
Cast: Naveen Polishetty, Priyadarshi, Rahul Ramakrishna
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video



JAANU (Telugu)
Ram and Jaanu are childhood sweethearts who meet at their school reunion after nearly two decades. Although initially awkward, they soon start recollecting their past and resolve their differences.
Cast: Sharwanand Myneni, Samantha Akkineni
- Watch on: Disney + Hotstar

ENGLISH

THE SINNER (English, series)
Anthology series that examines how and why ordinary people commit brutal crimes.
Cast: Bill Pullman, Dohn Norwood, Adam LeFevre
- Watch on: Netflix

BURNING (Korean)
Jong-su bumps into a girl who used to live in the same neighborhood, who asks him to look after her cat while she's on a trip to Africa. When back, she introduces Ben, a mysterious guy she met there, who confesses his secret hobby.
Cast: Ah-in Yoo, Steven Yeun, Jong-seo Jun
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

LUCIFER (English, series)
Lucifer Morningstar has decided he's had enough of being the dutiful servant in Hell and decides to spend some time on Earth to better understand humanity. He settles in Los Angeles - the City of Angels.
Cast: Tom Ellis, Lauren German, Kevin Alejandro
- Watch on: Netflix

HELL'S KITCHEN (English, series)
World renowned chef Gordon Ramsay puts aspiring young chefs through rigorous cooking challenges and dinner services at his restaurant in Hollywood, "Hell's Kitchen".
Cast: Gordon Ramsay, Jean Philippe Susilovic, Scott Leibfried
- Watch on: Netflix

SUBSCRIPTION
Prime Video: ₹ 129 per month
Disney+Hotstar: ₹ 399 per year
Netflix: ₹ 199 per month

AN ACT OF HAND

A city based illustrator gives you a glimpse of stories and patterns through artistic creativity

ANAGHA M

BENGALURU-based Anushka Kalro is an illustrator who's work takes inspiration from the women in her life. The artiste has worked on several commercial projects, as well as illustrated a coffee table book chronicling life in Basavanagudi, one of the city's oldest locales. Now Anushka has launched her own online print shop. She speaks about the website, upcoming book and her work:

How would you define your artistic style?
My artistic style is an amalgamation of stories and pattern. While most artists see shape, I see line first. For me, a lot of the art I make is inspired by the business and clutter around me, and is a response in line about the simplest forms my mind remembers.

What materials do you use and what is your creative process like?
Ink on paper is the medium I am most comfortable with and intuitively gravitate to. My stationary drawers comprise charcoal, ink, so many pigment liners of different thicknesses, acrylic paint, and anything that can give me the blackest blacks. That said, I've learned to retain the integrity of my style digitally in the interest of delivering more commercial projects. And now a lot of the time I work with taking a physical art piece and growing it digitally, or the other way around. I've also learned to weave in colour.

What can we expect from the online print shop?
My online print shop is where I curate and deliver collector's edition and limited edition prints of some of my artworks. The Collector's Edition Prints are an exclusive print run of two prints and one artist proof print, best suited for a collector looking to expand their assemblage of art. Limited Edition Prints are a series of five to ten prints and one artist proof, specifically for young collectors beginning their journey with art.

Who are the other artistes you respect and follow?
I am fascinated by the work of international artists like Kristjana Williams, Malika Favre, and Yuko Shimizu. Their work plays with line, storytelling and complexity too. A lot of the work I like is literature and photography and interior design. Bharat Sikka's way of seeing life around him through his

Dadi's Masala Box by Anushka Kalro

lens, Mancini Architects way of playing with heritage elements in a contemporary way, and Chitra Banarjee Divakaruni's ability to transport you to a different time with her words inspire my craft deeply.

Tell us a little more about your book on Basavanagudi.
The book on Basavanagudi is a commissioned work co-created with Melbourne based photographer, Ravnish Gandhi. Ravnish thrives in monochrome too. We were commissioned by Bangalore based real estate developers Machani Group to celebrate moments lost in time in erstwhile Bangalore. This wordless book is on the coffee tables of those that are nostalgic for a simpler Bangalore. The flower market, encaustic tiles on the floors of MN Krishna Rao's century old home, and the grills from the Theosophical society are some of the metaphors that found their place in my art for the book.

What can we expect from your next book, Dekho Magar Pyaar Se?
Dekho Magar Pyaar Se is a collaboration with my photographer friend Sanket Patel. The book is a collection of art and photography that compels you to 'look, but with kindness'. We intend to weave in insightful questions that have helped us journal as artists, and hope that the book becomes a visual anthology of each person's relationship with kindness. Botanicals, architecture, people, and dreams come together in the book. One of my favourite pages is one that comes to me as a recurring dream; One where I am swimming in space, and I feel unburdened by reality. I am really excited to see the book realised later this year.

Details: anushkakalro.com

COPING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA ANXIETIES

PAIRED WITH PANACHE
Anuja Pandey

One posing question for most of us today is how to constructively use social media to our benefit and not waste time mindlessly following or comparing. While Social media is incredibly helpful in leveraging and integrating people specially in times like these when we all are physically distant yet connected, it's of utmost importance to be responsible and avoid creating social media anxiety.

Anxieties of all kinds are prevalent right now so we have to be watchful.

"Pandemic generates anxiety. In this case there are three reasons. People just came out of one bout in 2020 and may not have been prepared for the next one so soon. This cycle is a lot faster in its peaking. Uncertainties are great source of anxiety. Social media too dramatise events and these are not representative of a modal outcome of Covid-19. However media must caution people to follow advisories," says Dr Gangadhar BN, former director of NIMHANS, Bengaluru..

The idea is to use social media positively, build bridges without the burnout. Today we all have the access to voice our opinion but the determining factor is how or what are we trying to circulate or achieve.

As social media influencers many of us have the power to shape impressionable minds.

While we need to also realise that content creators have their own pressure of delivering and meeting the expectations, and in doing so it's a whole lot of team effort, production and planning that goes into it; we should not be comparing or trying to achieve someone's optimised version. We don't have to give the sexiest groove as long as we enjoy the music.

"Social media sometimes stresses people out. I think whatever you do in life your happiness should be first and you should not do anything to please others. Enjoying every moment is what matters and social media should not become a extra tension in anyone's life", says the actor Adhvithi Shetty.

Many of us only post our perfect moments of life on social media, or a perfect cook out or a perfect life. But life is not about perfections or a quest to achieve a Zen state of mind. It's not about the perfect head stand with an hourglass body.

Life is tricky - it's about illnesses, going through stuff and still having the courage to start afresh, making others feel better, feeling wonderful despite our shortcomings and hurrahing for our partners or children who run their races, whether they stand first or last doesn't really matter as long as they run.

Life is about not trying to control it since it does literally control us as puppets while we have the illusion of control giving us a false sense of power. It's about realisation of our ordinariness and yet enjoying this mundane existence.

With increased toxicity and negativity online these days it's more about to think and act rather than react.

Let's embrace the authentic and less polished content and spread it across, less filters and more sunshine.

(The author is a social media influencer)

Adhvithi Shetty, actor

PLAY ON
Arjun Sukumaran

http://goo.gl/uNBWN3
(Arjun is a gamer, book lover and an all-round renaissance man)

PALYING ON ANOTHER GALAXY

When it comes to grand strategy video games, it's almost impossible to have a conversation without Paradox Interactive's name popping up sooner or later. With heavy-hitters like Hearts of Iron, Europa Universalis, Crusader Kings and Stellaris under its belt, it's easy to see why. I've long been a fan of strategy games, primarily the Civilization and Total War series, but I'd never dipped my toes into Paradox's notoriously complex waters; until a month ago when I bought Stellaris, and I've barely stopped playing it since.

Stellaris is a 4X game (that is, a game about exploring, expanding, exploiting and exterminating) where you are given the reins of a would-be interstellar empire. You start off with just a single planet, a couple of starships and a dream of galactic domination...and not much else. Paradox's games are primarily criticised for being obtuse and not particularly user-friendly, and even though Stellaris features helpful tips and hints throughout its UI, it's quite daunting when you're first starting out. Just exploring the various screens of data at your fingertips can be challenging enough that mastering the galaxy seems like it ought to be a stroll by comparison. It's going to be rough early on — I don't even want to think about how long it took me to figure out how planetary districts work! — but stick it out, because there's gold in them thar hills.

The sheer depth of the world that Stellaris provides you to play around in is probably best exemplified by the empires/species that it offers you as playable options. Scrolling through them, you'll start to get an idea of what you might've gotten yourself into. You'll find sentient rock monarchies, insectoid hive minds, ruthless plant-like capitalists and robotic diplomats, just to name a few off the top of my head. Each offers a play experience that will differ hugely from the others. For my first game, based on a suggestion I saw online, I chose to play as a Hive Mind because it simplifies certain aspects of the game — your population, seeing as how they're all part of the same gestalt consciousness, doesn't care about things like consumer goods or personal liberties and so on. During my second game, however, where I played as the United Nations of Earth, my good-for-nothing citizens wouldn't so much as get out of bed if I didn't bribe them with enough consumer goods, which was simultaneously frustrating

and hilarious. I cannot underestimate just how much is going on under the surface of Stellaris, but it is endlessly fascinating to poke and prod its systems and see what happens.

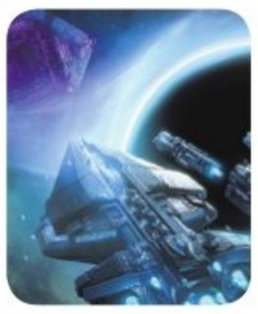
A word on longevity here — Stellaris, as previously mentioned, came out five years ago and Paradox has spent that time well. Multiple DLC packs have been released, each fleshing out the galaxy a little bit more in a different way; so much so that the Stellaris you can play today is a much more refined and complete version of the game that came out in 2016. I can only speak about the current experience, but this is reminiscent of Civilization V — a very good game to begin with, but one that became great with the release of its expansions.

I've barely scratched the surface here, because there's so much to say about Stellaris. It's always difficult to talk about a game this complex without getting bogged down or glossing over it too much, so I'll speak plainly — this is a simply staggering game that doesn't hold your hand at all, and there's so much to love about it. Honestly, talking about it for this long has just made me want to play it all the more so I'm going to do that now. You should too, if this sounds like it might be for you — it's not an easy ride, but it's well worth it!

WHAT'S NEW?

TOTAL WAR: ROME REMASTERED

The Total War series is another grand old strategy franchise, and the original Total War: Rome was one of the jewels in its crown. Its sequel, unfortunately, was one of the more disappointing entries in the franchise but, with this remaster of the original, Creative Assembly could yet right some wrongs with this return to the Pax Romana.



STELLARIS: NEMESIS

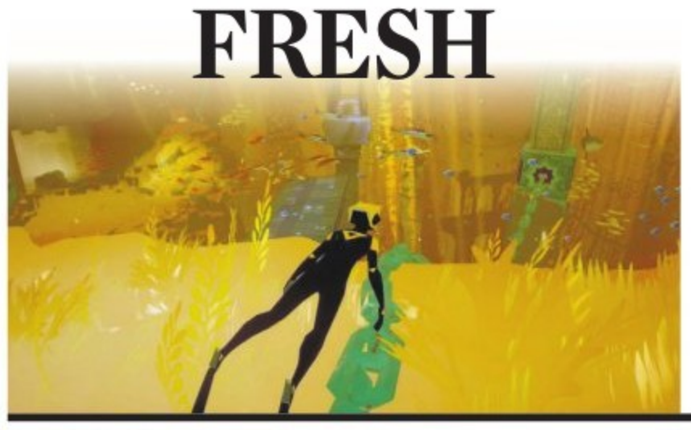
The latest DLC pack for Stellaris came out just last week, and it's a blast. Featuring new mechanics for diplomacy and espionage, it also throws a truly titanic twist into the mix — an endgame crisis usually befalls the galaxy during each game of Stellaris, but Nemesis offers you the chance to become that crisis.

CITY READ

Orating and acting classes for kids

School of Meaningful Experiences is organising summer camps in the month of April and May this year. The six -day online summer is designed for pre-teens and teenagers wanting to become confident speakers and communicators. The summer camp is designed to train teenagers from script writing to TED talks that focuses on making them good public speakers. The camp also attempts to encourage them to be a writer, orator, actor and help them think out of the box. Dates: April 26 - May 1; Age:13 -16 years, May 3 - May 8; Age: 8 -12 years, May 10 - May 15; Age: 13 - 16 years

ABZÛ-LUTELY FRESH



ARE YOU GAME?
Anusha Ganapathi

@quaffle_waffle

It is hot again. Instead of reaching out for a water bottle that's a room away, I download games with a water aesthetic (free on PSN this month!). I started with Subnautica. Subnautica is a beautiful underwater exploration game and all, but the universe is isolating and appears unfriendly. An hour into the game, I was completely lost, sweating, and constantly resurfacing to a vast expanse of nothingness. That just felt wrong. I should not be sweating when my character was underwater. So, I turned to Abzû.

Abzû uses visual storytelling to tell you a story...alright, there isn't really a story here. You are nudged to interpret some amazing art. The music, colours, and lighting all help. Ergo, at the end of the two-hour long game, you leave with a feeling of having learnt something 'deep'. It could be the literal deep — like the names of fish that you found near the ocean floor. It is more likely that you learnt the figurative 'deep'. You might suddenly catch yourself being hopeful, saying things like: "wow, there is really a lot more to life", and "maybe I should invest in ocean floor real-estate".

In Abzû, you are a diver, cutting through the ocean. In this breathing children's encyclopedia, you encounter sea creatures. There are big fish, small fish, some aesthetic flora. There are also turtles, sharks, whales, and prehistoric creatures. While the world looks massive and confusing, the game helps you by enforcing linearity. Paraphrasing the words of Rubeus Hagrid, "If anyone wanted to find out some stuff, all they'd have to do would be to follow the fish". With the diver, you travel to different parts of the ocean to break the corruption that has caught hold of these parts. There's no conflict, and no established progression in terms of story or combat. The game gives us no incentive to rush through each of the different locations, and every reason to patiently explore.

Abzû can be compared to the now classic "Journey", and the more recent "Pathless", both of which borrow elements from common creators. A full 7/7 seas for this game which enriches the niche genre of exploration-based gameplay.

SMART ADS
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Raj B Shetty: I don't want a direct OTT release for *Garuda Gamana Vrishabha Vahana*

Raj B Shetty, in this conversation with Cinema Express, opens up about his upcoming film, lockdown, his tryst with acting, and more...

Caption here Caption here Caption here

A SHARADHAA

IF everything had gone as per plan, Raj B Shetty's next film, *Garuda Gamana Vrishabha Vahana* (*GGVV*), would have been out in theatres on June 4. However, owing to the second wave of the pandemic, he has to postpone the release. The director also added that going by the current circumstances, he is not in a position to fix the next date. "Whether the situation will get better? Yes, there is hope. I have been discussing this with my friends, scattered across the world, who explained how pandemic works. They pointed out that the severe spike of cases will also see a drop soon, and that is how it has worked before. Equally, the safety measures taken by the government will bring the situation under control," he explains.

GGVV is a gangster drama that has two male leads, featuring Raj and Rishab Shetty. It is based on a sequence from Sri Devi Mahatme, a Yakshagana play about the ego clash between Shiva and Hari. The film has no prominent female characters except for a mother's character.

Not a rosy situation

The actor-director also discusses how pandemic has changed the present entertainment scenario. "Not long ago, a few star films released bringing back people to theatres. Theatre owners also put all their difficulties behind and reopened the theatres. Now with the second wave, we are not aware of the next move," says Raj B Shetty, adding, "Most importantly, there were few star releases lined up in April including *Salaga, Kotigobba 3* followed by *Bhajarangi 2* in May. They are all stalled now. And once the theatre reopens, we are bound to see a rush of films competing for release. It is not a rosy situation, and all of it has put me in a blank state of mind," he says.

"I am ready to wait, but I want *GGVV* to hit theatres first"

Raj B Shetty is not interested in releasing *GGVV* on any OTT platform. "The making and the storytelling of the film is very apt for theatre. So I am ready to wait for a few months. Having waited for a year, a few more months wouldn't damage anything. I have discussed this with the investors. They understand the situation," says the *Ondu Motteya Kathe* director and actor, who further explains the pros and cons of getting a direct OTT release. "OTT is meant for small screens, and it is always fine when the film is out on digital platforms post its theatrical release."

> It is much easier when you come to realise you are just a part of a big thing. It only becomes tough when you become the center of it. As of now, I am just part of it. Whatever is happening with everybody is happening to me, and I am one among them
>
> Raj B Shetty, actor, director

Raj B Shetty

Raj says that the fact somebody can watch the film while they cook is something he can't digest. "The time window to attract an audience to watch a film is very little. If a film can't catch the viewer's attention in 2 minutes, you can't make them watch the entire film. Writing for OTT is a different ball game altogether, in my opinion. OTT being a personal viewing, genres like crime, soft porn, comedy, and thriller will work better," he says.

'I have not watched a single film for over a year'

Raj B Shetty did not find the necessity to go out of his way to make use of this lockdown period. He says, "Working on something in a situation like this is more about survival than anything else. That's the reason, I am not pushing myself. I am completely out of my zone. I am not forcing myself even with the script. I know that I am capable of making a film between four walls, but I wouldn't make anything for the sake of it."

Pandemic has changed the way of creating films for the actor-director. "During the first lockdown, I thought it was a very good time, I could focus on myself. However, after 20 days, I was not happy, and there was no reason to be that way. I had completed the film, and there was no monetary issue to worry about. I was like 'what is the point of it?' I felt there is a grave problem in me. Since then, I have not watched films. Even the thought of a movie script, or a storyboard gets me disturbed," he says.

When asked how he is handling the second wave of the pandemic, "It is much easier when you come to realise you are just a part of a big thing. It only becomes tough when you become the center of it. As of now, I am just part of it. Whatever is happening with everybody is happening to me, and I am one among them. I spend my time on cricket and cooking - mentally and physically and it is relaxing. I am in that space, where I don't need to work to be happy."

I enjoy acting but it is not giving me the satisfaction

Raj, who will be seen in a pivotal role in *Thurthu Nirgamana, 777 Charlie,* and the web series Ekam has not taken up any further acting assignments. "When I entered films, I was very passionate about acting and did get some good characters to play. I never differentiated between lead roles and supporting characters. However, in general, I felt that the supporting roles do not add any value to the script. They are used just for the promotion of the film. It kind of hurt me. So, somewhere acting did not give me that satisfaction," says the filmmaker, adding, "Most of the directors, who want me to be part of the films, still expect me to bring out that *Ondu Motteya Kathe* shade in their films too. So, it became redundant for me. I am a person who gets bored easily of formulaic roles. So, I didn't get a kick out of acting. So, I have made it a point to be choosy, and I humbly refuse the films, which doesn't fit my bill," he says.

Hari Santhosh plans to remake *By Two Love* in Telugu

CE FEATURES

Director Hari Santhosh says he is intent on remaking *By Two Love* in Telugu, which is currently in pre-production, with preparations going on for starting the shoot He also claims that his complete focus on the remake made him opt out of another project he had agreed to work on, *Bumper.*

The director, who debuted in Tollywood debut last year with *College Kumar*, a remake of his 2017 original, is now shuttling between the post-production for the Kannada version of *By Two Love*, and the post-production of the Telugu version "I had narrated a synopsis of *By Two Love* to Sai Korrapat, who had earlier produced SS Rajamouli's Eega and had also distributed *KGF* in Telugu. He suggested that I make it in Telugu on a much bigger scale and a more popular star cast. Producer Sai plans to bankroll the project in association with KVN Production house, which is notably the production house behind the Kannada version," he says.

While Danveerrah and Sreeleela play the leads in the Kannada version of *By Two Love*, the team is still on the lookout for a new lead cast for Telugu. The official announcement for the cast and the crew is expected to happen, as and when Tollywood gets back on its feet.

Hari Santhosh

A still from *By Two Love*

Shah Rukh Khan's body double all set for acting debut

CE FEATURES

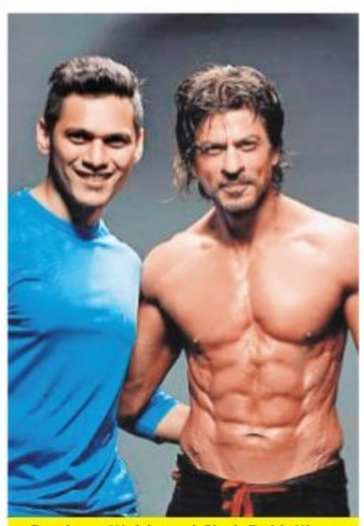
Shah Rukh Khan's body double Prashant Walde will release his film *Premaatur* on May 7, a week before Salman Khan's *Radhe* hist the screens on May 13.

Prashant has been working as Shah Rukh's body double for the past 15 years. He has worked with the superstar in films such as *Om Shanti Om Don*, Chennai Express,, *Dear Zindagi, Fan*, amongst others.

Premaatur, also starring Heta Shah, Kalyani Kumari, Sriraj Singh, Amit Sinha, Veer Singh, and Bindhya Kumari, is directed by Sumit Sagar.

Besides acting, Prashant has written the story, screenplay and dialogues, and also produced the film, which is co-produced by Shantanu Ghosh, Satya, and Praveen Walde.

Premaatur is pitched as a thriller, horror, and romantic drama, and Prashant has dedicated the film to SRK.


Prashant Walde and Shah Rukh Khan

GOPINATH RAJSENDRAN

AFTER Thanos' now-famous snap became the most defining moment of the franchise, Marvel, in this 'post-Blip' world is now once again in the process of creating new stories that are rooted in emotion and sentiment. After the fantastic WandaVision, we now have *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* that works better as a 'larger than life' story than it does as something relatable. In a moving moment at the end of *Avengers: Endgame, Steve Rogers* hands over the mantle of *Captain America* to Sam Wilson (Anthony Mackie) by giving away his shield. When Wilson tries it on for the first time, Rogers asks him how it feels, and he replies, "Like it's someone else's." Now, six months after those events, Wilson is still finding it awkward to slip into Captain America's red, blue and white shoes; he's instead happy to be the friendly neighbourhood Falcon. James Barnes (Sebastian Stan), who nodded in approval when Rogers trusted Wilson with the shield, is now a pardoned man attempting to make amends for his time as the brainwashed assassin, the Winter Soldier.

The two incompatible heroes team up when trouble comes in the form of The Flag Smashers, a team of anarchists who oppose nationalism and believe that life was better during the Blip. Led by Karli Morgenthau (Erin Kellyman), the group consists of power-enhanced individuals, made so by the faceless Power Broker. The titular duo also has to watch the horror of their government handing over the shield to a new Captain America, John Walker (Wyatt Russell). Chosen by the Global Repatriation Council (GRC) to handle the post-Blip revolutions, Walker, however, is a disturbed soul who isn't exactly capable of selflessness.

The Falcon and the Winter Soldier, at its core, touches aspects that Marvel rarely paid attention to in its earlier years. What does it mean for an African American to carry the shield of Captain America? What about the financial strain a hero's family endures? How bad do things have to get for you to search for help? The mini-series, in its first few episodes, asks such incisive questions. It's in the answering though that it feels like the makers have bitten off more than they can chew.

The best part of the series is when we are introduced to Isaiah Bradley, a war veteran who has been imprisoned and experimented on for 30 years. Despite having a rich character history in the comics, the series does not spend as much time as it should have on him. The same can be said about Helmut Zemo who, at one point, even dons the traditional purple mask from the comics. We get glimpses of his king-sized life as a Sokovian baron as well as brief dance moves in a Madripoor nightclub. Following requests from fans, Marvel has even released a one-hour extended cut of the dance sequence that has garnered six million hits on YouTube. Even the fictional Southeast Asian island of Madripoor, which has been the epicentre of many historic events in the comics, does not get the importance it deserves. It feels like the makers are simply ticking off a checklist of cameos and references without putting in heart.

On the other hand, Wyatt Russell's John Walker is a character we love to hate in this series. When he commits murder in broad daylight, not only do the event and its repercussions make way for one of the most interesting characters from Marvel's comic book stable, it also serves to take the franchise into dark territories that Marvel has kept away from thus far.

The Flag Smashers, labelled terrorists, show the potential to be among the best villains in the franchise. However, the series reduces them to serum-powered teenagers who are mere puppets in the hands of the not-so-mysterious Power Broker, whose identity is revealed in the season finale. While on reveals, one of the characters gets a wardrobe makeover in the final episode and unlike most costume choices in the films, this one is loyal to the comics at the expense of practicality. The much-parodied yellow-top-and-green-trouser-wearing Aquaman got a brilliant refashioning, but here, we are subjected to ski goggles!

For a show that's just six episodes long, there's plenty going on, and the titular heroes feel like kids strapped on a roller-coaster. They seldom show control over the events, and are forced to react, not act. It's during the action sequences that these heroes seem really at home. It wouldn't be an overstatement to say The Falcon and the Winter Soldier is groundbreaking in how it has redefined action for the small screen. Falcon's flying capabilities and Bucky's bionic arm are a treat to watch in the action sequences and are often even better than what we have seen them do in the feature films. The banter between the two misfits makes for some effective comedy too. Though some of their antics, like when one tells the other to stop flirting with his sister, are sure to remind you of the chemistry between leads of films like *Bad Boys, Rush Hour, Shanghai Knights* and *Hobbs & Shaw*, it's their personal struggles that make us wish we got more of them.

On the whole, *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* feels like terrific sights that you are getting glimpses of through a telescope. It's a series that struggles to match up to the lofty standards set by WandaVision. Despite scratching the surface of a lot of material that will surely be mined for much content in future seasons of the show, this first season has got to be judged as a mediocre origins story. Perhaps the second of this series, that is off to a shaky start, can be more entertaining? When Wilson picked up the shield from Rogers, he said, "I'll do my best." Let's hope we can see this from the makers next time around.

THE FALCON AND THE WINTER SOLDIER

Mediocre writing puts paid to Marvel's admirable intentions

Director: Kari Skogland

Cast: Sebastian Stan, Anthony Mackie, Wyatt Russell, Erin Kellyman, Daniel Bruhl, Emily VanCamp

Streaming on: Disney+ Hotstar

RATING 2.5/5